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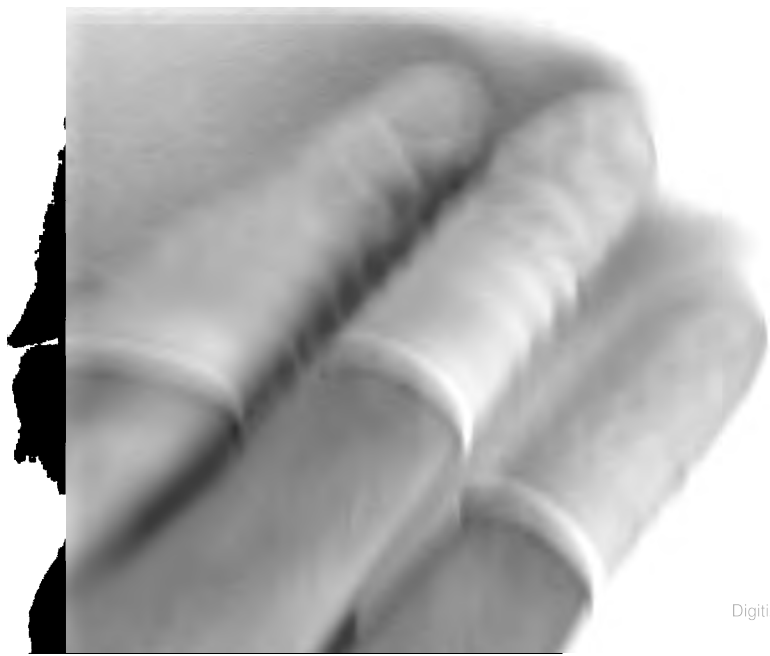


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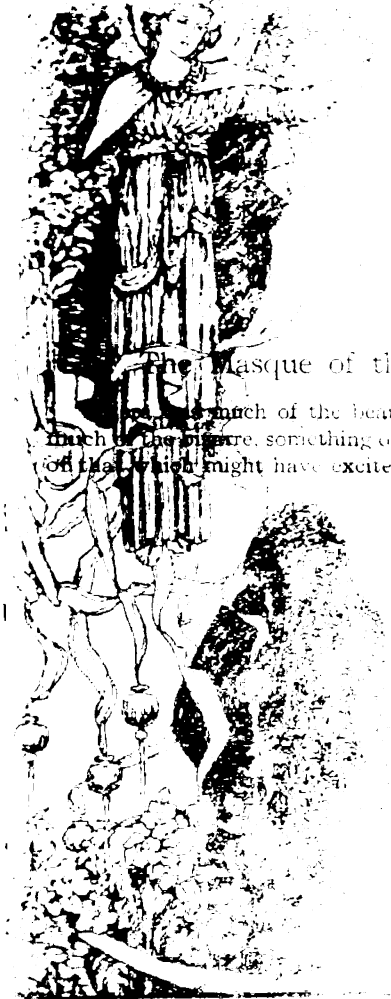
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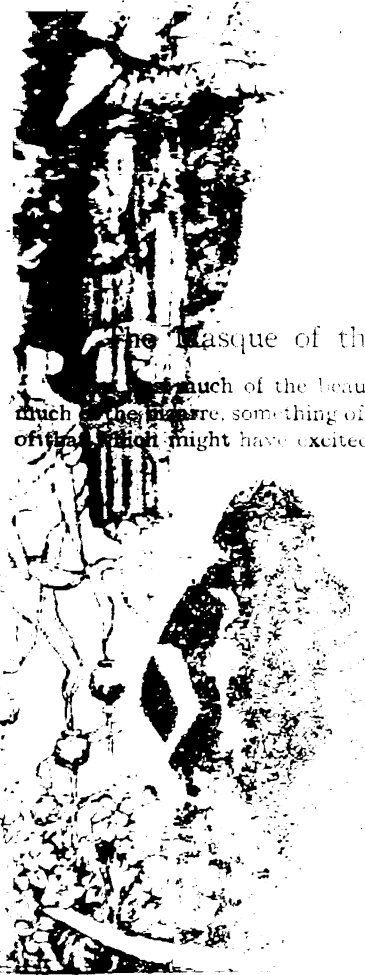




The Masque of the Red Death

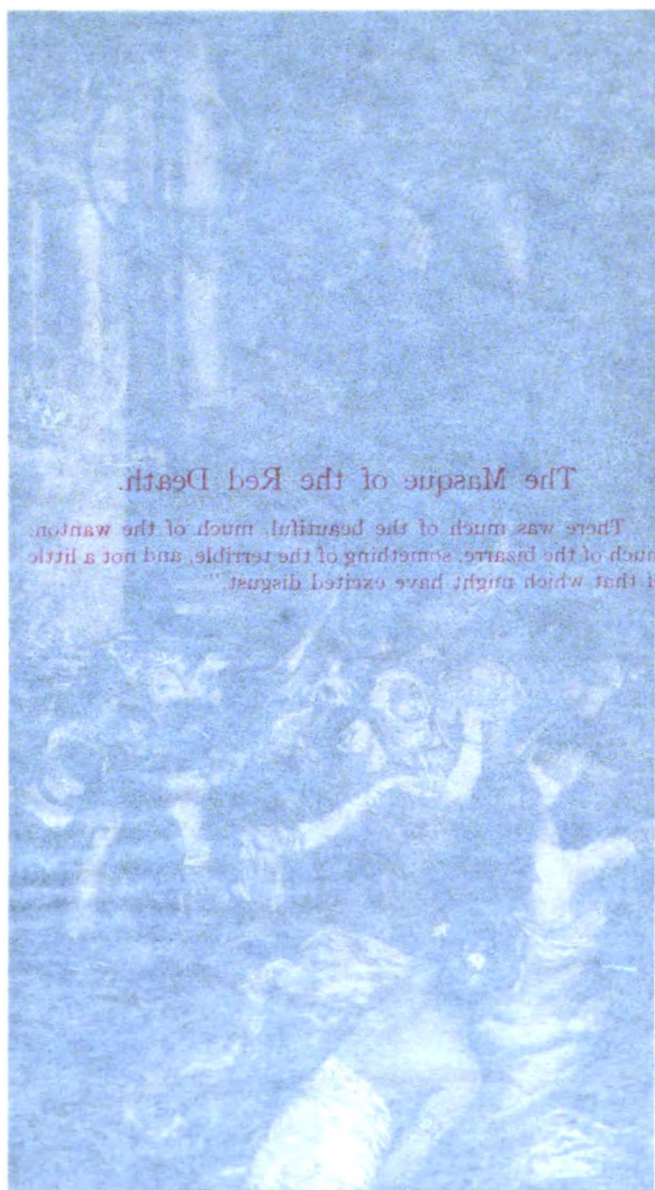
There was much of the beautiful, much of the sublime,
much of the figure, something of the terrible, and not a trace
of that which might have excited disgust.





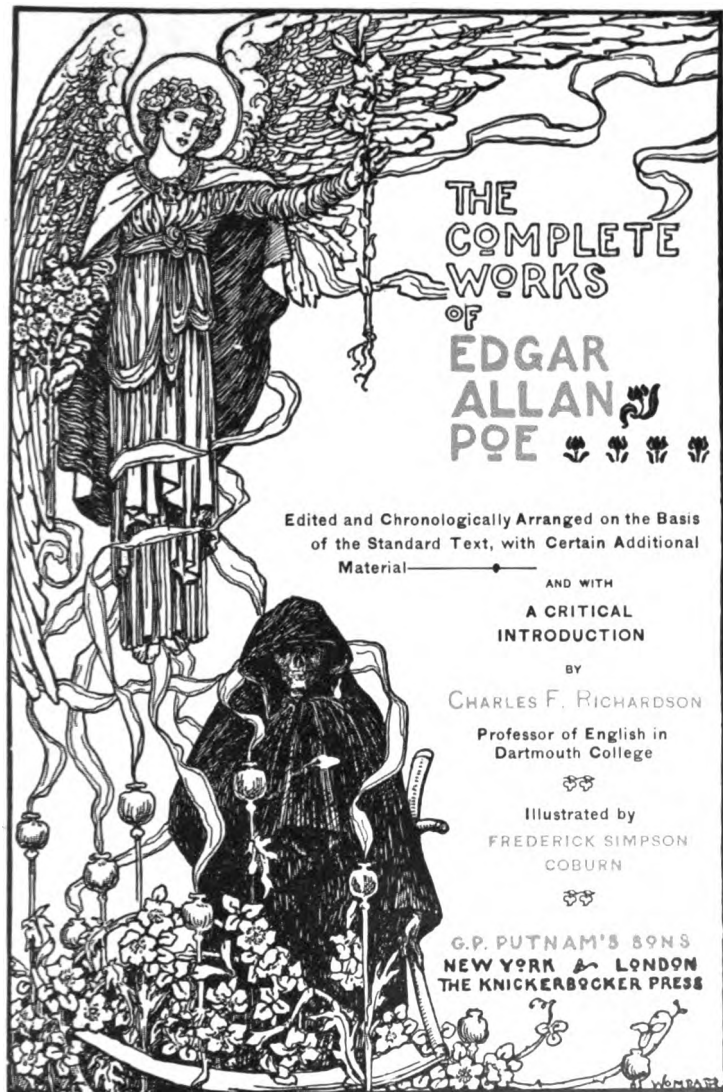
The Masque of the Red Death.

"It was such of the beautiful, such of the terrible, such of the horrible, something of the terrible, and not a little of the horrible, which might have excited disgust."



The Masque of the Red Death.

There was much of the beautiful, much of the wanton,
much of the bizarre, something of the terrible, and not a little
of that which might have excited disgust.



THE
COMPLETE
WORKS
OF
EDGAR
ALLAN
POE

Edited and Chronologically Arranged on the Basis
of the Standard Text, with Certain Additional
Material

AND WITH
A CRITICAL
INTRODUCTION

BY
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Dartmouth College

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COBURN

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK & LONDON
THE KNICKERBOCKER PRESS

THE
COMPLETE WORKS
=====OF=====
EDGAR ALLAN POE



CRITICISMS

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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CRITICISMS

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CRITICISMS



William Ellery Channing

IN speaking of Mr. William Ellery Channing, who has just published a very neat little volume of poems, we feel the necessity of employing the indefinite rather than the definite article. He is *a*, and by no means *the*, William Ellery Channing. He is only *the son* of the great essayist deceased. He is just such a person, in despite of his *clarum et venerabile nomen*, as Pindar would have designated by the significant term *τις*. It may be said in his favor that nobody ever heard of him. Like an honest woman, he has always succeeded in keeping himself from being made the subject of gossip. His book contains about sixty-three things, which he calls poems, and which he no doubt seriously supposes so to be. They are full of all kinds of mistakes, of which the most important is that of their having been printed at all. They are not precisely English; nor

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will we insult a great nation by calling them Kickapoo; perhaps they are Channingese. We may convey some general idea of them by two foreign terms not in common use,—the Italian *pavoneggiarsi*, “to strut like a peacock,” and the German word for “sky-rocketing,” *schwärmerei*. They are more preposterous, in a word, than any poems except those of the author of *Sam Patch*, for we presume we are right (are we not?) in taking it for granted that the author of *Sam Patch* is the very worst of all the wretched poets that ever existed upon earth.

In spite, however, of the customary phrase about a man’s “making a fool of himself,” we doubt if any one was ever a fool of his own free will and accord. A poet, therefore, should not always be taken too strictly to task. He should be treated with leniency, and, even when damned, should be damned with respect. Nobility of descent, too, should be allowed its privileges not more in social life than in letters. The son of a great author cannot be handled too tenderly by the critical Jack Ketch. Mr. Channing must be hung, that’s true. He must be hung *in terrorem*, and for this there is no help under the sun; but then we shall do him all manner of justice, and observe every species of decorum, and be especially careful of his feelings, and hang him gingerly and gracefully, with a silken cord, as the Spaniards hang their grandees of the blue blood, their nobles of the *sangre azul*.

William Ellery Channing

To be serious, then, as we always wish to be if possible, Mr. Channing (whom we suppose to be a very young man, since we are precluded from supposing him a very old one) appears to have been inoculated, at the same moment, with virus from Tennyson and from Carlyle. And here we do not wish to be misunderstood. For Tennyson, as for a man imbued with the richest and rarest poetic impulses, we have an admiration, a reverence unbounded. His *Morte d'Arthur*, his *Locksley Hall*, his *Sleeping Beauty*, his *Lady of Shalott*, his *Lotos Eaters*, his *Oenone*, and many other poems, are not surpassed, in all that gives to poetry its distinctive value, by the compositions of any one living or dead. And his leading error, that error which renders him unpopular, a point, to be sure, of no particular importance,—that very error, we say, is founded in truth, in a keen perception of the elements of poetic beauty. We allude to his quaintness, to what the world chooses to term his affectation. No true poet, no critic whose approbation is worth even a copy of the volume we now hold in our hand, will deny that he feels impressed, sometimes even to tears, by many of those very affectations which he is impelled by the prejudice of his education, or by the cant of his reason, to condemn. He should thus be led to examine the extent of the one, and to be wary of the deductions of the other. In fact, the profound intuition of Lord Bacon has supplied, in one of his

William Ellery Channing

immortal apothegms, the whole philosophy of the point at issue. "There is no exquisite beauty," he truly says, "without some strangeness in its proportions." We maintain, then, that Tennyson errs, not in his occasional quaintness, but in its continual and obtrusive excess. And, in accusing Mr. Channing of having been inoculated with virus from Tennyson, we merely mean to say that he has adopted and exaggerated that noble poet's characteristic defect, having mistaken it for his principal merit.

Mr. Tennyson is quaint only; he is never, as some have supposed him, obscure, except, indeed, to the uneducated, whom he does not address. Mr. Carlyle, on the other hand, is obscure only; he is seldom, as some have imagined him, quaint. So far he is right; for although quaintness, employed by a man of judgment and genius, may be made auxiliary to a poem, whose true thesis is beauty, and beauty alone, it is grossly, and even ridiculously, out of place in a work of prose. But in his obscurity it is scarcely necessary to say that he is wrong. Either a man intends to be understood, or he does not. If he write a book which he intends not to be understood, we shall be very happy indeed not to understand it; but if he write a book which he means to be understood, and, in this book, be at all possible pains to prevent us from understanding it, we can only say that he is an ass; and this, to be brief, is our private opinion of Mr.

William Ellery Channing

Carlyle, which we now take the liberty of making public.

It seems that, having deduced from Tennyson and Carlyle an opinion of the sublimity of everything odd, and of the profundity of everything meaningless, Mr. Channing has conceived the idea of setting up for himself as a poet of unusual depth, and very remarkable powers of mind. His airs and graces, in consequence, have a highly picturesque effect, and the Boston critics, who have a notion that poets are porpoises (for they are always talking about their running in "schools"), cannot make up their minds as to what particular school he must belong. We say the Bobby Button school, by all means. He clearly belongs to that. And should nobody ever have heard of the Bobby Button school, that is a point of no material importance. We will answer for it, as it is one of our own. Bobby Button is a gentleman with whom, for a long time, we have had the honor of an intimate acquaintance. His personal appearance is striking. He has quite a big head. His eyes protrude and have all the air of saucers. His chin retreats. His mouth is depressed at the corners. He wears a perpetual frown of contemplation. His words are slow, emphatic, and oracular. His "thes," "ands," and "buts" have more meaning than other men's polysyllables. His nods would have put Burleigh's to the blush. His whole aspect, indeed, conveys the idea of a gentleman

William Ellery Channing

modest to a fault, and painfully overburdened with intellect. We insist, however, upon calling Mr. Channing's school of poetry the Bobby Button school, rather because Mr. Channing's poetry is strongly suggestive of Bobby Button than because Mr. Button himself ever dallied, to any very great extent, with the Muses. With the exception, indeed, of a very fine *Sonnet to a Pig*,—or rather the fragment of a sonnet, for he proceeded no farther than the words "*O piggy wiggy*," with the *O* italicized for emphasis,—with the exception of this, we say, we are not aware of his having produced anything worthy of that stupendous genius which is certainly in him, and only wants, like the starling of Sterne, "to get out."

The best passage in the book before us is to be found at page 121, and we quote it, as a matter of simple justice, in full:

Dear friend, in this fair atmosphere again,
Far from the noisy echoes of the main,
Amid the world-old mountains, and the hills
From whose strange grouping a fine power distils
The soothing and the calm, I seek repose,
The city's noise forgot and hard stern woes,
As thou once saidst, the rarest sons of earth
Have in the dust of cities shown their worth.
Where long collision with the human curse
Has of great glory been the frequent nurse,
And only those who in sad cities dwell
Are of the green trees fully sensible.

William Ellery Channing

*To them the silver bells of tinkling streams
Seem brighter than an angel's laugh in dreams.*

The few lines italicized are highly meritorious, and the whole extract is so far decent and intelligible, that we experienced a feeling of surprise upon meeting it amid the doggerel which surrounds it. Not less was our astonishment upon finding, at page 18, a fine thought so well embodied as the following:

Or see the early stars, a mild sweet train,
Come out to bury the diurnal sun.

But, in the way of commendation, we have now done. We have carefully explored the whole volume, in vain, for a single additional line worth even the most qualified applause.

The utter abandon, the charming *négligé* the perfect looseness (to use a Western phrase) of his rhythm, is one of Mr. C.'s most noticeable, and certainly one of his most refreshing traits. It would be quite a pleasure to hear him read or scan, or to hear anybody else read or scan, such a line as this, at page 3, for example:

Masculine almost though softly carved in grace,

where "masculine" has to be read as a trochee, and "almost" as an iambus; or this, at page 8:

That compels me on through wood, and fell, and moor,

William Ellery Channing

where "that compels" has to be pronounced as equivalent to the iambus "me on"; or this, at page 18;

I leave thee, *the* maid spoke to *the* true youth,

where both the "thes" demand a strong accent to preserve the iambic rhythm; or this, at page 29:

So in our steps strides truth and honest trust,

where (to say nothing of the grammar, which may be Dutch, but is not English) it is quite impossible to get through with the "steps strides truth" without dislocating the under jaw; or this, at page 32:

The *serene* azure *the* keen stars are now;

or this, on the same page:

Sometime of sorrow, joy to *thy* Future,

or this, at page 56:

Harsh action, even in repose inwardly harsh;

or this, at page 59:

Provides *amplest* enjoyment. O my brother;

or this, at page 138:

Like the swift petrel, mimicking the wave's measure;

William Ellery Channing

about all of which the less we say the better.

At page 96, we read thus:

Where the untrammelled soul on her wind pinions,
Fearlessly sweeping, defies my earthly foes,
There, there upon that infinitest sea
Lady, thy hope, so fair a hope, summons me.

At page 51, we have it thus:

The river calmly flows
Through shining banks, thro' lonely glen
Where the owl shrieks, tho' ne'er the cheer of men
Has stirred its mute repose;
Still if you should walk there you would go there again.

At page 136, we read as follows:

Tune thy clear voice to no funereal song,
For O Death stands to welcome thee sure.

At page 116, he has this:

These graves, you mean;
Their history who knows better than I?
For in the busy street strikes on my ear
Each sound, even inaudible voices
Lengthen the long tale my memory tells

Just below, on the same page, he has

I see but little difference truly,

and at page 76, he fairly puts the climax to metrical
absurdity in the lines which follow:

William Ellery Channing

The spirit builds his house in *the* last flowers—
A beautiful mansion; how the colors live,
Intrikately delikate!

This is to be read, of course, intrikittly delikkit, and “intrikittly delikkit” it is, unless, indeed, we are very especially mistaken.

The affectations—the Tennysonisms of Mr. Channing—pervade his book at all points, and are not easily particularized. He employs, for example, the word “delight” for “delighted”; as at page 2:

Delight to trace the mountain-brook's descent.

He uses, also, all the prepositions in a different sense from the rabble. If, for instance, he was called upon to say “on,” he would n't say it by any means, but he 'd say “off,” and endeavor to make it answer the purpose. For “to,” in the same manner, he says “from”; for “with,” “of,” and so on; at page 2, for example:

Nor less in winter, 'mid the glittering banks
Heaped *of* unspotted snow, the maiden roved.

For “serene,” he says “*serene*”; as at page 4:

The influence of this *serene* isle.

For “subdued,” he says “*subdued*”; as at page 16:

So full of thought, so *subdued* to bright fears.

William Ellery Channing

By the way, what kind of fears are bright ?

For "eternal," he says "eterne"; as at page 30:

Has risen, *and* an eterne sun now paints.

For "friendless," he substitutes "friendless"; as at page 31:

Are drawn in other figures. Not friendless.

To "future" he prefers "future"; as at page 32:

Sometime of sorrow. Joy to thy future.

To "azure," in the same way, he prefers "azure"; as at page 46:

Ye stand each separate in the azure.

In place of "unheard," he writes "unheard"; as thus, at page 47:

Or think, tho' unheard, that your sphere is dumb.

In place of "perchance," he writes "perchance"; as at page 71:

When perchance sorrow with her icy smile.

Instead of "more infinite," he writes "inflater," with an accent on the "nit," as thus, at page 100:

Hope's child, I summon inflater powers.

William Ellery Channing

And here we might as well ask Mr. Channing, in passing, what idea he attaches to infinity, and whether he really thinks that he is at liberty to subject the adjective "infinite" to degrees of comparison. Some of these days we shall hear, no doubt, of "eternal," "eternaler," and "eternalest."

Our author is quite enamored of the word "sumptuous," and talks about "sumptuous trees," and "sumptuous girls," with no other object, we think, than to employ the epithet at all hazards and upon all occasions. He seems unconscious that it means nothing more than expensive, or costly; and we are not quite sure that either trees or girls are, in America, either the one or the other.

For "loved" Mr. C. prefers to say "was loving," and takes great pleasure in the law phrase, "the same." Both peculiarities are exemplified at page 20, where he says:

The maid was loving this enamoured same.

He is fond also of inversions and contractions, and employs them in a very singular manner. At page 15 he has,

Now may I thee describe a paradise.

At page 86 he says,

Thou lazy river, flowing neither way
Me figurest, and yet thy banks seem gay.

William Ellery Channing

At page 143 he writes,

Men change that heaven above not more;

meaning that men change so much that heaven above does not change more. At page 150 he says,

But so much soul hast thou within thy form
Than luscious summer days thou art the more;

by which he would imply that the lady has so much soul within her form that she is more luscious than the luscious summer days.

Were we to quote specimens under the general head of "utter and irredeemable nonsense," we should quote nine tenths of the book. Such nonsense, we mean, as the following from page 11:

I hear thy solemn anthem fall,
Of richest song upon my ear,
That clothes thee in thy golden pall
As this wide sun flows on the mere.

Now let us translate this: He hears (Mr. Channing) a solemn anthem, of richest song, fall upon his ear, and this anthem clothes the individual who sings it in that individual's golden pall in the same manner that, or at the time when, the wide sun flows on the mere; which is all very delightful, no doubt.

William Ellery Channing

At page 37 he informs us that

**It is not living,
To a soul believing,
To change each noble joy,
Which our strength employs,
For a state half rotten
And a life of toys;**

and that it is

**Better to be forgotten
Than lose equipoise.**

And we dare say it is, if one could only understand what kind of equipoise is intended. It is better to be forgotten, for instance, than to lose one's equipoise on the top of a shot-tower.

Occupying the whole of page 88, he has the six lines which follow, and we will present any one (the author not excepted) with a copy of the volume, if any one will tell us what they are all about:

**He came and waved a little silver wand,
He dropped the veil that hid a statue fair,
He drew a circle with that pearly hand,
His grace confined that beauty in the air,
Those limbs so gentle now at rest from flight,
Those quiet eyes now musing on the night.**

At page 102 he has the following:

William Ellery Channing

Dry leaves with yellow ferns, they are
Fit wreath of autumn, while a star
Still, bright, and pure, our frosty air
Shivers in twinkling points
Of thin celestial hair
And thus one side of heaven anoints.

This we think we can explain. Let us see. Dry leaves, mixed with yellow ferns, are a wreath fit for autumn at the time when our frosty air shivers a still bright, and pure star with twinkling points of thin celestial hair, and with this hair, or hair plaster, anoints one side of the sky. Yes, this is it, no doubt.

At page 123, we have these lines:

My sweet girl is lying still
In her lovely atmosphere;
The gentle hopes her blue veins fill
With pure silver warm and clear.

O see her hair, O mark her breast!
Would it not, O! comfort thee,
If thou couldst nightly go to rest
By that virgin chastity?

Yes; we think, upon the whole, it would. The eight lines are entitled a *Song*, and we should like very much to hear Mr. Channing sing it.

Pages 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 are filled with short *Thoughts* in what Mr. C. supposes to be the manner of Jean Paul. One of them runs thus:

William Ellery Channing

How shall I live ? In earnestness.
What shall I do ? Work earnestly.
What shall I give ? A willingness.
What shall I gain ? Tranquillity.
But do you mean a quietness
In which I act and no man bless ?
Flash out in action infinite and free
Action conjoined with deep tranquillity,
Resting upon the soul's true utterance,
And life shall flow as merry as a dance.

All our readers will be happy to hear, we are sure, that Mr. C. is going to "flash out." Elsewhere at page 97, he expresses very similar sentiments:

My empire is myself and I defy
The external; yes, I rule the whole or die!

It will be observed here that Mr. Channing's empire is himself (a small kingdom, however), that he intends to defy "the external," whatever that is (perhaps he means the infernals), and that, in short, he is going to rule the whole or die; all which is very proper, indeed, and nothing more than we have to expect from Mr. C.

Again, at page 146, he is rather fierce than otherwise. He says:

We surely were not meant to ride the sea,
Skimming the wave in that so prisoned small,
Reposing our infinite faculties utterly.
Boom like a roaring sunlit waterfall,
Humming to infinite abysses: speak loud, speak free.

William Ellery Channing

Here Mr. Channing not only intends to "speak loud and free" himself, but advises everybody else to do likewise. For his own part, he says, he is going to "boom"—"to hum and to boom"—"to hum like a roaring waterfall" and "boom to an infinite abyssm." What, in the name of Beelzebub, is to become of us all?

At page 39, while indulging in similar bursts of fervor and of indignation, he says:

Thou meetest a common man
With a delusive show of *can*,

and this passage we quote by way of instancing what we consider the only misprint in the book. Mr. Channing could never have meant to say:

Thou meetest a common man
With a delusive show of *can*,

for what is a delusive show of *can*? No doubt it should have been,

Thou meetest a little pup
With a delusive show of tin-cup.

A *can*, we believe is a tin-cup, and the cup must have been tied to the tail of the pup. Boys will do such tricks, and there is no earthly way of preventing them, we believe, short of cutting off their heads, or the tails of the pups.

William Ellery Channing

And this remarkable little volume is, after all, by William Ellery Channing. A great name, it has been said, is, in many cases, a great misfortune. We hear daily complaints from the George Washington Dixons, the Socrates Smiths, and the Napoleon Buonaparte Joneses, about the inconsiderate ambition of their parents and sponsors. By inducing invidious comparison, these *prænomína* get their bearers (so they say) into every variety of scrapes. If George Washington Dixon, for example, does not think proper, upon compulsion, to distinguish himself as a patriot, he is considered a very singular man; and Socrates Smith is never brought up before his honor the Mayor without receiving a double allowance of thirty days; while his honor the Mayor can assign no sounder reason for his severity than that better things than getting toddied are to be expected of Socrates. Napoleon Buonaparte Jones, on the other hand, to say nothing of being called Nota Bene Jones by all his acquaintances, is cowskinned with perfect regularity, five times a month, merely because people will feel it a point of honor to cowskin a Napoleon Buonaparte.

And yet these gentlemen, the Smiths and the Joneses, are wrong *in toto*, as the Smiths and the Joneses invariably are. They are wrong, we say, in accusing their parents and sponsors. They err in attributing their misfortunes and persecutions to the *prænomína*, to the names assigned them at the baptismal font. Mr.

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Socrates Smith does not receive his double quantum of thirty days because he is called Socrates, but because he is called Socrates Smith. Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte Jones is not in the weekly receipt of a flogging on account of being Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte, but simply on account of being Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte Jones. Here, indeed, is a clear distinction. It is the surname which is to blame, after all. Mr. Smith must drop the Smith. Mr. Jones should discard the Jones. No one would ever think of taking Socrates—Socrates solely—to the watchhouse; and there is not a bully living who would venture to cowskin Napoleon Buonaparte *per se*. And the reason is plain. With nine individuals out of ten, as the world is at present happily constituted, Mr. Socrates (without the Smith) would be taken for the veritable philosopher of whom we have heard so much, and Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte (without the Jones) would be received implicitly as the hero of Austerlitz. And should Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte (without the Jones) give an opinion upon military strategy, it would be heard with the profoundest respect. And should Mr. Socrates (without the Smith) deliver a lecture or write a book, what critic so bold as not to pronounce it more luminous than the logic of Emerson, and more profound than the Orphicism of Alcott? In fact, both Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones, in the case we have imagined, would derive, through their own ingenuity, a very material advantage. But

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no such ingenuity has been needed in the case of Mr. William Ellery Channing, who has been befriended by Fate, or the foresight of his sponsors, and who has no Jones or Smith at the end of his name.

And here, too, a question occurs. There are many people in the world silly enough to be deceived by appearances. There are individuals so crude in intellect, so green (if we may be permitted to employ a word which answers our purpose much better than any other in the language), so green, we say, as to imagine, in the absence of any indication to the contrary, that a volume bearing upon its title-page the name of William Ellery Channing must necessarily be the posthumous work of that truly illustrious author, the sole William Ellery Channing of whom anybody in the world ever heard. There are a vast number of uninformed young persons prowling about our bookshops, who will be raw enough to buy, and even to read half through this pretty little book, (God preserve and forgive them!) mistaking it for the composition of another. But what then? Are not books made, as well as razors, to sell? The poet's name is William Ellery Channing, is it not? And if a man has not a right to the use of his own name, to the use of what has he a right? And could the poet have reconciled it to his conscience to have injured the sale of his own volume by any uncalled-for announcement upon the title-page, or in a preface, to the effect that he is

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not his father, but only his father's very intelligent son? To put the case more clearly by reference to our old friends, Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones: Is either Mr. Smith, when mistaken for Socrates, or Mr. Jones, when accosted as Napoleon, bound by any conceivable species of honor to inform the whole world—the one, that he is not Socrates, but only Socrates Smith; the other, that he is by no means Napoleon Buonaparte, but only Napoleon Buonaparte Jones?





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WYANDOTTE, or, *The Huttet Knoll*, is, in its general features, precisely similar to the novels enumerated in the title.¹ It is a forest subject; and, when we say this, we give assurance that the story is a good one; for Mr. Cooper has never been known to fail, either in the forest or upon the sea. The interest, as usual, has no reference to plot, of which, indeed, our novelist seems altogether regardless, or incapable, but depends, first, upon the nature of the theme; secondly, upon a Robinson-Crusoe-like detail in its management; and, thirdly, upon the frequently repeated portraiture of the half-civilized Indian. In saying that the interest depends, first, upon the nature of the theme, we mean to sug-

¹ *Wyandotte*; or, *The Huttet Knoll*. A tale, by the author of *The Pathfinder*, *Deerslayer*, *Last of the Mohicans*, *Pioneers*, *Prairie*, etc. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard.

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gest that this theme—life in the wilderness—is one of intrinsic and universal interest, appealing to the heart of man in all phases; a theme, like that of life upon the ocean, so unfailingly omniprevalent in its power of arresting and absorbing attention, that while success or popularity is, with such a subject, expected as a matter of course, a failure might be properly regarded as conclusive evidence of imbecility on the part of the author. The two theses in question have been handled *usque ad nauseam*, and this through the instinctive perception of the universal interest which appertains to them. A writer distrustful of his powers can scarcely do better than discuss either one or the other. A man of genius will rarely, and should never, undertake either; first, because both are excessively hackneyed; and, secondly, because the reader never fails, in forming his opinion of a book, to make discount, either wittingly or unwittingly, for that intrinsic interest which is inseparable from the subject and independent of the manner in which it is treated. Very few and very dull indeed are those who do not instantaneously perceive the distinction; and thus there are two great classes of fictions: a popular and widely circulated class read with pleasure, but without admiration, in which the author is lost or forgotten, or remembered, if at all, with something very nearly akin to contempt; and then, a class not so popular, nor so widely diffused, in which, at every paragraph,

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arises a distinctive and highly pleasurable interest, springing from our perception and appreciation of the skill employed, or the genius evinced, in the composition. After perusal of the one class, we think solely of the book; after reading the other, chiefly of the author. The former class leads to popularity; the latter, to fame. In the former case, the books sometimes live, while the authors usually die; in the latter, even when the works perish, the man survives. Among American writers of the less generally circulated, but more worthy and more artistical, fictions, we may mention Mr. Brockden Brown, Mr. John Neal, Mr. Simms, Mr. Hawthorne; at the head of the more popular division we may place Mr. Cooper.

The Huttred Knoll, without pretending to detail facts, gives a narrative of fictitious events, similar, in nearly all respects, to occurrences which actually happened during the opening scenes of the Revolution, and at other epochs of our history. It pictures the dangers, difficulties, and distresses of a large family, living, completely insulated, in the forest. The tale commences with a description of the "region which lies in the angle formed by the junction of the Mohawk with the Hudson, extending as far south as the line of Pennsylvania, and west to the verge of that vast rolling plain which composes Western New York," a region of which the novelist has already frequently written, and the whole of which, with a trivial exception, was





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a wilderness before the Revolution. Within this district, and on a creek running into the Unadilla, a certain Captain Willoughby purchases an estate or "patent," and there retires, with his family and dependents, to pass the close of his life in agricultural pursuits. He has been an officer in the British army, but, after serving many years, has sold his commission, and purchased one for his only son, Robert, who alone does not accompany the party into the forest. This party consists of the captain himself, his wife, his daughter, Beulah, an adopted daughter, Maud Meredith, an invalid sergeant, Joyce, who had served under the captain, a Presbyterian preacher, Mr. Woods, a Scotch mason, Jamie Allen, an Irish laborer, Michael O'Hearn, a Connecticut man, Joel Strides, four negroes, Old Plin and Young Plin, Big Smash and Little Smash, eight axemen, a house-carpenter, a millwright, etc., etc. Besides these, a Tuscarora Indian called Nick, or Wyandotte, accompanies the expedition. This Indian, who figures largely in the story, and gives it its title, may be considered as the principal character—the one chiefly elaborated. He is an outcast from his tribe, has been known to Captain Willoughby for thirty years, and is a compound of all the good and bad qualities which make up the character of the half-civilized Indian. He does not remain with the settlers, but appears and reappears at intervals upon the scene.

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Nearly the whole of the first volume is occupied with a detailed account of the estate purchased (which is termed "The Hutted Knoll," from a natural mound upon which the principal house is built), and of the progressive arrangements and improvements. Toward the close of the volume the Revolution commences; and the party at the "Knoll" are besieged by a band of savages and "rebels," with whom an understanding exists on the part of Joel Strides, the Yankee. This traitor, instigated by the hope of possessing Captain Willoughby's estate, should it be confiscated, brings about a series of defections from the party of the settlers, and finally, deserting himself, reduces the whole number to six or seven capable of bearing arms. Captain Willoughby resolves, however, to defend his post. His son, at this juncture, pays him a clandestine visit, and, endeavoring to reconnoitre the position of the Indians, is made captive. The captain, in an attempt at rescue, is murdered by Wyandotte, whose vindictive passions had been aroused by ill-timed allusions, on the part of Willoughby, to floggings previously inflicted, by his orders, upon the Indian. Wyandotte, however, having satisfied his personal vengeance, is still an ally of the settlers. He guides Maud, who is beloved by Robert, to the hut in which the latter is confined, and effects his escape. Aroused by this escape, the Indians precipitate their attack upon the "Knoll," which, through

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the previous treachery of Strides in ill-hanging a gate, is immediately carried. Mrs. Willoughby, Beulah, and others of the party are killed. Maud is secreted and thus saved by Wyandotte. At the last moment, when all is apparently lost, a reinforcement appears, under command of Evert Beekman, the husband of Beulah, and the completion of the massacre is prevented. Woods, the preacher, had left the "Knoll," and made his way through the enemy, to inform Beekman of the dilemma of his friends. Maud and Robert Willoughby are, of course, happily married. The concluding scene of the novel shows us Wyandotte repenting the murder of Willoughby, and converted to Christianity through the agency of Woods.

It will be at once seen that there is nothing original in this story. On the contrary, it is even excessively commonplace. The lover, for example, rescued from captivity by the mistress; the "Knoll" carried through the treachery of an inmate; and the salvation of the besieged, at the very last moment, by a reinforcement arriving, in consequence of a message borne to a friend by one of the besieged, without the cognizance of the others; these, we say, are incidents which have been the common property of every novelist since the invention of letters. And as for plot, there has been no attempt at anything of the kind. The tale is a mere succession of events, scarcely any one of which has any necessary dependence upon any one other.

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Plot, however, is at best, an artificial effect, requiring, like music, not only a natural bias, but long cultivation of taste for its full appreciation; some of the finest narratives in the world—*Gil-Blas* and *Robinson Crusoe*, for example—have been written without its employment; and *The Huttet Knoll*, like all the sea and forest novels of Cooper, has been made deeply interesting, although depending upon this peculiar source of interest not at all. Thus the absence of plot can never be critically regarded as a defect; although its judicious use, in all cases aiding and in no case injuring other effects, must be regarded as of a very high order of merit.

There are one or two points, however, in the mere conduct of the story now before us, which may, perhaps, be considered as defective. For instance, there is too much obviousness in all that appertains to the hanging of the large gate. In more than a dozen instances Mrs. Willoughby is made to allude to the delay in the hanging; so that the reader is too positively and pointedly forced to perceive that this delay is to result in the capture of the "Knoll." As we are never in doubt of the fact, we feel diminished interest when it actually happens. A single vague allusion, well managed, would have been in the true artistical spirit.

Again: we see too plainly, from the first, that Beekman is to marry Beulah, and that Robert Willoughby

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is to marry Maud. The killing of Beulah, of Mrs. Willoughby, and Jamie Allen produces, too, a painful impression, which does not properly appertain to the right fiction. Their deaths affect us as revolting and supererogatory, since the purposes of the story are not thereby furthered in any regard. To Willoughby's murder, however distressing, the reader makes no similar objection; merely because in his decease is fulfilled a species of poetical justice. We may observe here, nevertheless, that his repeated references to his flogging the Indian seem unnatural, because we have otherwise no reason to think him a fool or a madman, and these references, under the circumstances, are absolutely insensate. We object, also to the manner in which the general interest is dragged out, or suspended. The besieging party are kept before the "Knoll" so long, while so little is done, and so many opportunities of action are lost, that the reader takes it for granted that nothing of consequence will occur—that the besieged will be finally delivered. He gets so accustomed to the presence of danger that its excitement at length departs. The action is not sufficiently rapid. There is too much procrastination. There is too much mere talk for talk's sake. The interminable discussions between Woods and Captain Willoughby are, perhaps, the worst feature of the book, for they have not even the merit of referring to the matters on hand. In general, there is quite too

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much colloquy for the purpose of manifesting character, and too little for the explanation of motive. The characters of the drama would have been better made out by action; while the motives to action, the reasons for the different courses of conduct adopted by the *dramatis personæ*, might have been made to proceed more satisfactorily from their own mouths in casual conversations than from that of the author in person. To conclude our remarks upon the head of ill-conduct in the story, we may mention occasional incidents of the merest melodramatic absurdity; as, for example, at page 156, of the second volume, where "Willoughby had an arm around the waist of Maud, and bore her forward with a rapidity to which her own strength was entirely unequal." We may be permitted to doubt whether a young lady, of sound health and limbs, exists, within the limits of Christendom, who could not run faster, on her own proper feet, for any considerable distance, than she could be carried upon one arm of either the Cretan Milo or of the Hercules Farnese.

On the other hand, it would be easy to designate many particulars which are admirably handled. The love of Maud Meredith for Robert Willoughby is painted with exquisite skill and truth. The incident of the tress of hair and box is naturally and effectively conceived. A fine collateral interest is thrown over the whole narrative by the connection of the theme with

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that of the Revolution; and, especially, there is an excellent dramatic point, at page 124 of the second volume, where Wyandotte, remembering the stripes inflicted upon him by Captain Willoughby, is about to betray him to his foes, when his purpose is arrested by a casual glimpse, through the forest, of the hut which contains Mrs. Willoughby, who had preserved the life of the Indian by inoculation for the smallpox.

In the depicting of character, Mr. Cooper has been unusually successful in *Wyandotte*. One or two of his personages, to be sure, must be regarded as little worth. Robert Willoughby, like most novel heroes, is a nobody; that is to say, there is nothing about him which may be looked upon as distinctive. Perhaps he is rather silly than otherwise; as, for instance, when he confuses all his father's arrangements for his concealment, and bursts into the room before Strides, afterward insisting upon accompanying that person to the Indian encampment, without any possible or impossible object. Woods, the parson, is a sad bore, upon the Dominie Sampson plan, and is, moreover, caricatured. Of Captain Willoughby we have already spoken—he is too often on stilts. Evert Beekman and Beulah are merely episodic. Joyce is nothing in the world but Corporal Trim; or, rather, Corporal Trim and water. Jamie Allen, with his prate about Catholicism, is insufferable. But Mrs. Willoughby, the humble, shrinking, womanly

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wife, whose whole existence centres in her affections, is worthy of Mr. Cooper. Maud Meredith is still better. In fact, we know no female portraiture, even in Scott, which surpasses her; and yet the world has been given to understand, by the enemies of the novelist, that he is incapable of depicting a woman. Joel Strides will be recognized by all who are conversant with his general prototypes of Connecticut. Michael O'Hearn, the County Leitrim man, is an Irishman all over, and his portraiture abounds in humor; as, for example, at page 31 of the first volume, where he has a difficulty with a skiff, not being able to account for its revolving upon its own axis, instead of moving forward! or at page 132, where, during divine service, to exclude at least a portion of the heretical doctrine, he stops one of his ears with his thumb; or, at page 195, where a passage occurs so much to our purpose that we will be pardoned for quoting it in full. Captain Willoughby is drawing his son up through a window, from his enemies below. The assistants, placed at a distance from this window to avoid observation from without, are ignorant of what burthen is at the end of the rope:

“The men did as ordered, raising their load from the ground a foot or two at a time. In this manner the burthen approached, yard after yard, until it was evidently drawing near the window.

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“ ‘It’s the captain hoisting up the big baste of a hog, for provisioning the hoose again a saige,’ whispered Mike to the negroes, who grinned as they tugged; ‘and, when the craitur squails, see to it that ye do not squail yourselves.’ At that moment the head and shoulders of a man appeared at the window. Mike let go the rope, seized a chair, and was about to knock the intruder upon the head; but the captain arrested the blow.

“ ‘It’s one o’ the vagabone Injins that has undermined the hog and come up in its stead,’ roared Mike.

“ ‘It’s my son,’ said the captain; ‘see that you are silent and secret.’ ”

The negroes are, without exception, admirably drawn. The Indian, Wyandotte, however, is the great feature of the book, and is, in every respect, equal to the previous Indian creations of the author of *The Pioneer*. Indeed, we think this “forest gentleman” superior to the other noted heroes of his kind, the heroes which have been immortalized by our novelist. His keen sense of the distinction, in his own character, between the chief, Wyandotte, and the drunken vagabond, Sassy Nick; his chivalrous delicacy toward Maud, in never disclosing to her that knowledge of her real feelings toward Robert Willoughby, which his own Indian intuition had discovered; his enduring animosity toward Captain Willoughby,

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softened, and for thirty years delayed, through his gratitude to the wife; and then, the vengeance consummated, his pity for that wife conflicting with his exultation at the deed,—these, we say, are all traits of a lofty excellence indeed. Perhaps the most effective passage in the book, and that which most distinctively brings out the character of the Tuscarora, is to be found at pages 50, 51, 52, and 53 of the second volume, where, for some trivial misdemeanor, the captain threatens to make use of the whip. The manner in which the Indian harps upon the threat, returning to it again and again, in every variety of phrase, forms one of the finest pieces of mere character-painting with which we have any acquaintance.

The most obvious and most unaccountable faults of *The Huttred Knoll*, are those which appertain to the style—to the mere grammatical construction; for, in other and more important particulars of style, Mr. Cooper, of late days, has made a very manifest improvement. His sentences, however, are arranged with an awkwardness so remarkable as to be matter of absolute astonishment, when we consider the education of the author, and his long and continual practice with the pen. In minute descriptions of localities, any verbal inaccuracy or confusion becomes a source of vexation and misunderstanding, detracting very much from the pleasure of perusal; and in these inaccuracies *Wyandotte* abounds. Although, for in-

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stance, we carefully read and reread that portion of the narrative which details the situation of the "Knoll," and the construction of the buildings and walls about it, we were forced to proceed with the story without any exact or definite impressions upon the subject. Similar difficulties, from similar causes, occur *passim* throughout the book. For example, at page 41, vol. i.:

"The Indian gazed at the house, with that fierce intentness which sometimes glared, in a manner that had got to be, in its ordinary aspects, dull and besotted." This it is utterly impossible to comprehend. We presume, however, the intention is to say that although the Indian's ordinary manner (of gazing) had "got to be" dull and besotted, he occasionally gazed with an intentness that glared, and that he did so in the instance in question. The "got to be" is atrocious; the whole sentence no less so.

Here at page 9, vol. i., is something excessively vague: "Of the latter character is the face of most of that region which lies in the angle formed by the junction of the Mohawk with the Hudson," etc., etc. The Mohawk, joining the Hudson, forms two angles, of course, an acute and an obtuse one; and, without further explanation, it is difficult to say which is intended.

At page 55, vol. i., we read: "The captain, owing to his English education, had avoided straight lines and formal paths, giving to the little spot the

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improvement on nature which is a consequence of embellishing her works without destroying them. On each side of this lawn was an orchard, thrifty and young, and which *were* already beginning to show signs of putting forth their blossoms." Here we are tautologically informed that improvement is a consequence of embellishment, and supererogatorily told that the rule holds good only where the embellishment is not accompanied by destruction. Upon the "each orchard *were*" it is needless to comment.

At page 30, vol i., is something similar, where Strides is represented as "never doing anything that required a particle more than the exertion and strength that were absolutely necessary to effect his object." Did Mr. C. ever hear of any labor that required more exertion than was necessary? He means to say that Strides exerted himself no further than was necessary, that 's all.

At page 59, vol. i., we find this sentence: "He was advancing by the only road that was ever travelled by the stranger as he approached the hut; or, he came up the valley." This is merely a vagueness of speech. "Or" is intended to imply "that is to say." The whole would be clearer thus: "He was advancing by the valley, the only road travelled by a stranger approaching the hut." We have here sixteen words, instead of Mr. Cooper's twenty-five.

At page 8, vol. ii., is an unpardonable awkwardness,

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although an awkwardness strictly grammatical. "I was a favorite, I believe, with, certainly was much petted by, both." Upon this we need make no further observation. It speaks for itself.

We are aware, however, that there is a certain air of unfairness in thus quoting detached passages for animadversion of this kind; for, however strictly at random our quotations may really be, we have, of course, no means of proving the fact to our readers; and there are no authors from whose works individual inaccurate sentences may not be culled. But we mean to say that Mr. Cooper, no doubt through haste or neglect, is remarkably and especially inaccurate, as a general rule; and, by the way of demonstrating this assertion, we will dismiss our extracts at random and discuss some entire page of his composition. More than this: we will endeavor to select that particular page upon which it might naturally be supposed he would bestow the most careful attention. The reader will say at once: "Let this be his first page—the first page of his preface." This page, then, shall be taken, of course.

"The history of the borders is filled with legends of the sufferings of isolated families, during the troubled scenes of colonial warfare. Those which we now offer to the reader are distinctive in many of their leading facts, if not rigidly true in the details. The first alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction."

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"Abounds with legends," would be better than "is filled with legends"; for it is clear that if the history were filled with legends, it would be all legend and no history. The word "of," too, occurs, in the first sentence, with an unpleasant frequency. The "those" commencing the second sentence grammatically refers to the noun "scenes" immediately preceding, but is intended for "legends." The adjective "distinctive" is vaguely and altogether improperly employed. Mr. C., we believe, means to say, merely, that although the details of his legend may not be strictly true, facts similar to his leading ones have actually occurred. By use of the word "distinctive," however, he has contrived to convey a meaning nearly converse. In saying that his legend is "distinctive" in many of the leading facts, he has said what he clearly did not wish to say; viz., that his legend contained facts which distinguished it from all other legends; in other words, facts never before discussed in other legends, and belonging peculiarly to his own. That Mr. C. did mean what we suppose, is rendered evident by the third sentence: "The first alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction." This third sentence itself, however, is very badly constructed. "The first" can refer, grammatically, only to "facts"; but no such reference is intended. If we ask the question, What is meant by "the first"? what "alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction"? the natural

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reply is "that facts similar to the leading ones have actually happened." The circumstance is alone to be cared for—this consideration "alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction."

"One of the misfortunes of a nation is to hear nothing besides its own praises." This is the fourth sentence, and is by no means lucid. The design is to say that individuals composing a nation, and living altogether within the national bounds, hear from each other only praises of the nation, and that this is a misfortune to the individuals, since it misleads them in regard to the actual condition of the nation. Here it will be seen that, to convey the intended idea, we have been forced to make distinction between the nation and its individual members; for it is evident that a nation is considered as such only in reference to other nations; and thus as a nation, it hears very much "besides its own praises"; that is to say, it hears the detractions of other rival nations. In endeavoring to compel his meaning within the compass of a brief sentence, Mr. Cooper has completely sacrificed its intelligibility.

The fifth sentence runs thus: "Although the American Revolution was probably as just an effort as was ever made by a people to resist the first inroads of oppression, the cause had its evil aspects, as well as all other human struggles."

The American Revolution is here improperly called

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an "effort." The effort was the cause, of which the Revolution was the result. A rebellion is an "effort" to effect a revolution. An "inroad of oppression" involves an untrue metaphor; for "inroad" appertains to aggression, to attack, to active assault. "The cause had its evil aspects as well as all other human struggles" implies that the cause had not only its evil aspects, but had, also, all other human struggles. If the words must be retained at all, they should be thus arranged: "The cause, like [or as well as] all other human struggles, had its evil aspects"; or better thus: "The cause had its evil aspect, as have all human struggles." "Other" is superfluous.

The sixth sentence is thus written: "We have been so much accustomed to hear everything extolled, of late years, that could be dragged into the remotest connection with that great event, and the principles which led to it, that there is danger of overlooking truth in a pseudo patriotism." The "of late years," here, should follow the "accustomed," or precede the "we have been"; and the Greek "pseudo" is objectionable, since its exact equivalent is to be found in the English "false." "Spurious" would be better, perhaps, than either.

Inadvertences such as these sadly disfigure the style of *The Huttred Knoll*, and every true friend of its author must regret his inattention to the minor morals of the Muse. But these "minor morals," it may be

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said, are trifles at best. Perhaps so. At all events, we should never have thought of dwelling so pertinaciously upon the unessential demerits of *Wyandotte*, could we have discovered any more momentous upon which to comment.





R. H. Horne¹



R. R. H. HORNE, the author of the *Orion*, has of late years acquired a high and extensive home reputation, although, as yet, he is only partially known in America. He will be remembered, however, as the author of a very well-written introduction to Black's translation of Schiegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, and as a contributor with Wordsworth, Hunt, Miss Barrett, and others, to "Chaucer Modernized." He is the author, also, of *Cosmo de Medici*, of *The Death of Marlowe*, and, especially, of *Gregory the Seventh*, a fine tragedy, prefaced with an "Essay on Tragic Influence." *Orion* was originally advertised to be sold for a farthing; and at this price three large editions were actually sold. The fourth edition (a specimen of which now lies before us) was issued at a shilling, and also sold. A fifth is promised at half a crown; this likewise, with even a sixth at a crown, may be

¹ *Orion; An Epic Poem in Three Books.* By R. H. Horne. Fourth Edition. London: Published by J. Miller.

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disposed of, partly through the intrinsic merit of the work itself, but chiefly through the ingenious novelty of the original price.

We have been among the earliest readers of Mr. Horne, among the most earnest admirers of his high genius; for a man of high, of the highest genius, he unquestionably is. With an eager wish to do justice to his *Gregory the Seventh*, we have never yet found exactly that opportunity we desired. Meantime, we looked with curiosity for what the British critics would say of a work which, in the boldness of its conception, and in the fresh originality of its management, would necessarily fall beyond the routine of their customary verbiage. We saw nothing, however, that either could or should be understood; nothing, certainly, that was worth understanding. The tragedy itself was, unhappily, not devoid of the ruling cant of the day, and its critics (that cant incarnate) took their cue from some of its infected passages, and proceeded forthwith to rhapsody and æsthetics, by way of giving a common-sense public an intelligent idea of the book. By the "cant of the day" we mean the disgusting practice of putting on the airs of an owl, and endeavoring to look miraculously wise; the affectation of second sight, of a species of ecstatic prescience, of an intensely bathetic penetration into all sorts of mysteries, psychological ones in especial; an Orphic, an ostrich affectation, which buries its

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head in balderdash, and, seeing nothing itself, fancies, therefore, that its preposterous carcass is not a visible object of derision for the world at large.

Of *Orion* itself, we have, as yet, seen few notices in the British periodicals, and these few are merely repetitions of the old jargon. All that has been said, for example, might be summed up in some such paragraph as this:

"*Orion* is the earnest outpouring of the oneness of the psychological Man. It has the individuality of the true Singleness. It is not to be regarded as a Poem, but as a Work, as a multiple Theogony, as a manifestation of the Works and the Days. It is a pinion in the Progress, a wheel in the Movement that moveth ever and goeth always, a mirror of Self-Inspection, held up by the Seer of the Age essential, of the Age *in esse* ; for the Seers of the Ages possible, *in posse*. We hail a brother in the work."

Of the mere opinions of the donkeys who bray thus, of their mere dogmas and doctrines, literary, æsthetical, or what not, we know little, and, upon our honor, we wish to know less. Occupied, Laputacally, in their great work of a progress that never progresses, we take it for granted, also, that they care as little about ours. But whatever the opinions of these people may be, however portentous the "Idea" which they have been so long threatening to "evolve," we still think it clear that they take a very roundabout way of

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evolving it. The use of language is in the promulgation of thought. If a man, if an Orphicist, or a Seer, or whatever else he may choose to call himself, while the rest of the world calls him an ass,—if this gentleman have an idea which he does not understand himself, the best thing he can do is to say nothing about it; for, of course, he can entertain no hope that what he, the Seer, cannot comprehend should be comprehended by the mass of common humanity; but if he have an idea which is actually intelligible to himself, and if he sincerely wishes to render it intelligible to others, we then hold it as indisputable that he should employ those forms of speech which are the best adapted to further his object. He should speak to the people in that people's ordinary tongue. He should arrange words such as are habitually employed for the several preliminary and introductory ideas to be conveyed—he should arrange them in collocations such as those in which we are accustomed to see those words arranged.

But to all this the Orphicist thus replies: "I am a Seer. My Idea, the idea which by providence I am especially commissioned to evolve, is one so vast, so novel, that ordinary words, in ordinary collocations, will be insufficient for its comfortable evolution." Very true. We grant the vastness of the idea—it is manifested in the sucking of the thumb; but, then, if ordinary language be insufficient, ordinary language

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which men understand, a *fortiori* will be insufficient that inordinate language which no man has ever understood, and which any well-educated baboon would blush in being accused of understanding. The "Seer," therefore, has no other resource but to oblige mankind by holding his tongue, suffering his Idea to remain quietly "unevolved," until some mesmeric mode of intercommunication shall be invented, whereby the antipodal brains of the Seer and of the man of Common Sense shall be brought into the necessary rapport. Meantime we earnestly ask if bread-and-butter be the vast Idea in question, if bread-and-butter be any portion of this vast idea? for we have often observed that when a Seer has to speak of even so usual a thing as bread-and-butter, he can never be induced to mention it outright. He will, if you choose, say anything and everything but bread-and-butter. He will consent to hint at buckwheat cake. He may even accommodate you so far as to insinuate oatmeal porridge; but, if bread-and-butter be really the matter intended, we never yet met the Orphicist who could get out the three individual words "bread-and-butter."

We have already said that *Gregory the Seventh* was unhappily infected with the customary cant of the day, the cant of the muddle-pates who dishonor a profound and ennobling philosophy by styling themselves transcendentalists. In fact, there are few highly

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sensitive or imaginative intellects for which the vortex of mysticism, in any shape, has not an almost irresistible influence, on account of the shadowy confines which separate the unknown from the sublime. Mr. Horne, then, is, in some measure, infected. The success of his previous works has led him to attempt, zealously, the production of a poem which should be worthy his high powers. We have no doubt that he revolved carefully in mind a variety of august conceptions, and from these thoughtfully selected what his judgment rather than what his impulses designated as the noblest and the best. In a word, he has weakly yielded his own poetic sentiment of the poetic; yielded it, in some degree, to the pertinacious opinion and talk of a certain junto by which he is surrounded, —a junto of dreamers whose absolute intellect may, perhaps, compare with his own very much after the fashion of an ant-hill with the Andes. By this talk, by its continuity rather than by any other quality it possessed, he has been badgered into the attempt at commingling the obstinate oils and waters of poetry and of truth. He has been so far blinded as to permit himself to imagine that a maudlin philosophy (granting it to be worth enforcing) could be enforced by poetic imagery, and illustrated by the jingling of rhythm; or, more unpardonably, he has been induced to believe that a poem, whose single object is the creation of beauty, the novel collocation of old forms

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of the beautiful and of the sublime, could be advanced by the abstractions of a maudlin philosophy.

But the question is not even this. It is not whether it be not possible to introduce didacticism, with effect, into a poem, or possible to introduce poetical images and measures, with effect, into a didactic essay. To do either the one or the other would be merely to surmount a difficulty, would be simply a feat of literary sleight of hand. But the true question is, whether the author who shall attempt either feat will not be laboring at a disadvantage, will not be guilty of a fruitless and wasteful expenditure of energy. In minor poetical efforts, we may not so imperatively demand an adherence to the true poetical thesis. We permit trifling to some extent in a work which we consider a trifle at best. Although we agree, for example, with Coleridge, that poetry and passion are discordant, yet we are willing to permit Tennyson to bring, to the intense passion which prompted his *Locksley Hall*, the aid of that terseness and pungency which are derivable from rhythm and from rhyme. The effect he produces, however, is a purely passionate, and not, unless in detached passages of this magnificent philippic, a properly poetic, effect. His *Oenone*, on the other hand, exalts the soul not into passion, but into a conception of pure beauty, which in its elevation, its calm and intense rapture, has in it a foreshadowing of the future and spiritual life, and as far transcends earthly passion as

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the holy radiance of the sun does the glimmering and feeble phosphorescence of the glowworm. His *Morte d'Arthur* is in the same majestic vein. The *Sensitive Plant* of Shelley is in the same sublime spirit. Nor, if the passionate poems of Byron excite more intensely a greater number of readers than either the *Oenone* or the *Sensitive Plant*, does this indisputable fact prove anything more than that the majority of mankind are more susceptible of the impulses of passion than of the impressions of beauty. Readers do exist, however, and always will exist, who, to hearts of maddening fervor, unite, in perfection, the sentiment of the beautiful,—that divine sixth sense which is yet so faintly understood; that sense which phrenology has attempted to embody in its organ of ideality; that sense which is the basis of all Cousin's dreams; that sense which speaks of God through his purest, if not his sole, attribute; which proves, and which alone proves His existence.

To readers such as these, and only to such as these, must be left the decision of what the true poesy is. And these, with no hesitation, will decide that the origin of poetry lies in a thirst for a wilder beauty than earth supplies; that poetry itself is the imperfect effort to quench this immortal thirst by novel combinations of beautiful forms (collections of forms), physical or spiritual, and that this thirst when even partially allayed, this sentiment when even feebly

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meeting response, produces emotion to which all other human emotions are vapid and insignificant.

We shall now be fully understood. If, with Coleridge, who, however erring at times, was precisely the mind fitted to decide a question such as this; if, with him, we reject passion from the true, from the pure poetry; if we reject even passion; if we discard as feeble, as unworthy the high spirituality of the theme (which has its origin in a sense of the Godhead); if we dismiss even the nearly divine emotion of human love, that emotion which, merely to name, causes the pen to tremble,—with how much greater reason shall we dismiss all else? And yet there are men who would mingle with the august theme the merest questions of expediency, the cant topics of the day, the doggerel æsthetics of the time; who would trammel the soul in its flight to an ideal Helusion, by the quirks and quibbles of chopped logic. There are men who do this; lately there are a set of men who make a practice of doing this, and who defend it on the score of the advancement of what they suppose to be truth. Truth is, in its own essence, sublime, but her loftiest sublimity, as derived from man's clouded and erratic reason, is valueless, is pulseless, is utterly ineffective when brought into comparison with the unerring sense of which we speak; yet grant this truth to be all which its seekers and worshippers pretend, they forget that it is not truth *per se*, which is made their thesis,

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but an argumentation, often maudlin and pedantic, always shallow and unsatisfactory (as from the mere inadaptation of the vehicle it must be), by which this truth, in casual and indeterminate glimpses, is, or is not, rendered manifest.

We have said that, in minor poetical efforts, we may tolerate some deflection from the true poetical thesis; but when a man of the highest powers sets himself seriously to the task of constructing what shall be most worthy of those powers, we expect that he shall so choose his theme as to render it certain that he labor not at disadvantage. We regret to see any trivial or partial imperfection of detail; but we grieve deeply when we detect any radical error of conception.

In setting about *Orion*, Mr. Horne proposed to himself (in accordance with the views of his junto) to "elaborate a morality"; he ostensibly proposed this to himself; for, in the depths of his heart we know that he wished all juntos and all moralities in Erebus. In accordance with the notions of this set, however, he felt a species of shamefacedness in not making the enforcement of some certain dogmas or doctrines (questionable or unquestionable) about progress the obvious or apparent object of his poem. This shamefacedness is the cue to the concluding sentence of the preface: "Meantime, the design of this poem of *Orion* is far from being intended as a mere echo or reflection

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of the past, and is, in itself, and in other respects, a novel experiment upon the mind of a nation." Mr. Horne conceived, in fact, that to compose a poem merely for that poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to be his purpose, would be to subject himself to the charge of imbecility, of triviality, of deficiency in the true dignity and force; but had he listened to the dictates of his own soul, he could not have failed to perceive at once that under the sun there exists no work more intrinsically noble than this very poem written solely for the poem's sake.

But let us regard *Orion* as it is. It has an under and an upper current of meaning; in other words, it is an allegory. But the poet's sense of fitness (which, under no circumstances of mere conventional opinion could be more than half subdued) has so far softened this allegory as to keep it, generally, well subject to the ostensible narrative. The purport of the moral conveyed is by no means clear, showing conclusively that the heart of the poet was not with it. It vacillates. At one time a certain set of opinions predominate, then another. We may generalize the subject, however, by calling it a homily against supineness or apathy in the cause of human progress, and in favor of energetic action for the good of the race. This is precisely the idea of the present school of canters. How feebly the case is made out in the poem, how insufficient has been all Mr. Horne's poetical rhetoric in convincing

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even himself, may be gleaned from the unusual bombast, rigmarole, and mystification of the concluding paragraph, in which he has thought it necessary to say something very profound, by way of putting the sting to his epigram, the point to his moral. The words put us much in mind of the "nonsense verses" of Du Bartas.

And thus, in the end, each soul may to itself,
With truth before it as its polar guide,
Become both Time and Nature, whose fixt paths
Are spiral, and when lost will find new stars,
And in the universal Movement join:

The upper current of the theme is based upon the various Greek fables about Orion. The author, in his brief preface, speaks about "writing from an old Greek fable," but his story is, more properly, a very judicious selection and modification of a great variety of Greek and Roman fables concerning Orion and other personages with whom these fables bring Orion in collision. And here we have only to object that the really magnificent abilities of Mr. Horne might have been better employed in an entirely original conception. The story he tells is beautiful indeed, and *nil tetigit*, certainly, *quod non ornavit*, but our memories, our classic recollections are continually at war with his claims to regard, and we too often find ourselves rather speculating upon what he might have done than admiring what he has really accomplished.

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The narrative, as our poet has arranged it, runs nearly thus: Orion, hunting on foot amid the mountains of Chios, encounters Artemis (Diana) with her train. The goddess, at first indignant at the giant's intrusion upon her grounds, becomes, in the second place, enamored. Her pure love spiritualizes the merely animal nature of Orion, but does not render him happy. He is filled with vague aspirations and desires. He buries himself in sensual pleasures. In the mad dreams of intoxication, he beholds a vision of Merope, the daughter of Œnopion, King of Chios. She is the type of physical beauty. She cries in his ear: "Depart from Artemis! She loves thee not; thou art too full of earth." Awaking, he seeks the love of Merope. It is returned. Œnopion, dreading the giant and his brethren, yet scorning his pretensions, temporizes. He consents to bestow upon Orion the hand of Merope, on condition of the island being cleared within six days of its savage beasts and serpents. Orion, seeking the aid of his brethren, accomplishes the task. Œnopion again hesitates. Enraged, the giants make war upon him and carry off the princess. In a remote grove Orion lives, in bliss, with his earthly love. From this delirium of happiness he is aroused by the vengeance of Œnopion, who causes him to be surprised while asleep and deprived of sight. The princess, being retaken, immediately forgets and deserts her lover, who, in his wretchedness, seeks, at

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the suggestion of a shepherd, the aid of Eos (Aurora) who, also becoming enamored of him, restores his sight. The love of Eos, less earthly than that of Merope, less cold than that of Artemis, fully satisfies his soul. He is at length happy. But the jealousy of Artemis destroys him. She pierces him with her arrows while in the very act of gratefully renovating her temple at Delos. In despair, Eos flies to Artemis, reproves her, represents to her the baseness of her jealousy and revenge, softens her, and obtains her consent to unite with herself—with Eos—in a prayer to Zeus (Jupiter) for the restoration of the giant to life. The prayer is heard. Orion is not only restored to life, but rendered immortal and placed among the constellations, where he enjoys forever the pure affection of Eos, and becomes extinguished each morning in her rays.

In ancient mythology, the giants are meant to typify various energies of nature. Pursuing, we suppose, this idea, Mr. Horne has made his own giants represent certain principles of human action or passion. Thus Orion himself is the worker or builder, and is the type of action or movement itself; but, in various portions of the poem, this allegorical character is left out of sight, and that of speculative philosophy takes its place, a mere consequence of the general uncertainty of purpose, which is the chief defect of the work. Sometimes we even find Orion a destroyer, in place

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of a builder; as, for example, when he destroys the grove about the temple of Artemis, at Delos. Here he usurps the proper allegorical attribute of Rhexergon (the second of the seven giants named), who is the breaker-down, typifying the revolutionary principle. Autarces, the third, represents the mob, or, more strictly, waywardness—capricious action. Harpax, the fourth, serves for rapine; Briastor, the fifth, for brute force; Encolyon, the sixth, the “Chainer of the Wheel,” for conservatism; and Akinetos, the seventh, and most elaborated, for apathy. He is termed “The Great Unmoved,” and in his mouth is put all the “worldly wisdom,” or selfishness, of the tale. The philosophy of Akinetos is, that no merely human exertion has any appreciable effect upon the movement; and it is amusing to perceive how this great truth (for most sincerely do we hold it to be such) speaks out from the real heart of the poet, through his Akinetos, in spite of all endeavor to overthrow it by the example of the brighter fate of Orion.

The death of Akinetos is a singularly forcible and poetic conception, and will serve to show how the giants are made to perish, generally, during the story, in agreement with their allegorical natures. The “Great Unmoved” quietly seats himself in a cave after the death of all his brethren, except Orion.

Thus Akinetos sat from day to day,
Absorbed in indolent sublimity,

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Reviewing thoughts and knowledge o'er and o'er;
And now he spake, now sang unto himself,
Now sank to brooding silence. From above,
While passing, Time the rock touch'd, and it oozed
Petrific drops, gently at first and slow.
Reclining lonely in his fixed repose,
The Great Unmoved unconsciously became
Attached to that he pressed; and soon a part
Of the rock. *There clung th' excrescence, till strong hands,
Descended from Orion, made large roads,
And built steep walls, squaring down rocks for use.*

The italicized conclusion of this fine passage affords an instance, however, of a very blameable concision, too much affected throughout the poem.

In the deaths of Autarces, Harpax, and Encolyon, we recognize the same exceeding vigor of conception. These giants conspire against Orion, who seeks the aid of Artemis, who, in her turn, seeks the assistance of Phoibos (Phœbus). The conspirators are in a cave, with Orion.

Now Phoibus thro' the cave
Sent a broad ray! and lo! the solar beam
Filled the great cave with radiance equable,
And not a cranny held one speck of shade.
A moony halo round Orion came,
As of some pure protecting influence,
While with intense light glared the walls and roof,
The heat increasing. The three giants stood
With glazing eyes, fixed. Terribly the light
Beat on the dazzled stone, and the cave hummed

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With reddening heat, till the red hair and beard
Of Harpax showed no difference from the rest,
Which once were iron-black. The sullen walls
Then smouldered down to steady oven-heat,
Like that with care attained when bread has ceased
Its steaming, and displays an angry tan.
The appalled faces of the giants showed
Full consciousness of their immediate doom.
And soon the cave a potter's furnace glowed
Or kiln for largest bricks, and thus remained
The while Orion, in his halo clasped
By some invisible power, beheld the clay
Of these his early friends change. Life was gone.
Now sank the heat—the cave-walls lost their glare,
The red lights faded, and the halo pale
Around him into chilly air expanded.
There stood the three great images, in hue
Of chalky white and red, like those strange shapes
In Egypt's ancient tombs; but presently
Each visage and each form with cracks and flaws
Was seamed, and the lost countenance brake up,
As, with brief toppling, forward prone they fell.

The deaths of Rhexergon and Biastor seem to discard
(and this we regret not) the allegorical meaning alto-
gether, but are related with even more exquisite rich-
ness and delicacy of imagination than those of the
other giants. Upon this occasion it is the jealousy of
Artemis which destroys.

But with the eve
Fatigue o'ercame the giants, and they slept.
Dense were the rolling clouds, starless the glooms;

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But o'er a narrow rift, once drawn apart,
Showing a field remote of violet hue,
The high moon floated, and her downward gleam
Shone on the upturned giant faces. Rigid
Each upper feature, loose the nether jaw;
Their arms cast wide with open palms; their chests
Heaving like some large engine. Near them lay
Their bloody clubs, with dust and hair begrimed,
Their spears and girdles, and the long-noosed thongs.
Artemis vanished; all again was dark.
With day's first streak Orion rose, and loudly
To his companions called. But still they slept.
Again he shouted; yet no limb they stirred,
Tho' scarcely seven strides distant. He approached,
*And found the spot, so sweet with clover flower
When they had cast them down, was now arrayed
With many-headed poppies, like a crowd
Of dusky Ethiops in a magic cirque
Which had sprung up beneath them in the night,
And all entranced the air.*

There are several minor defects in *Orion*, and we may as well mention them here. We sometimes meet with an instance of bad taste in a revolting picture or image; for example, at page 59 of this edition:

Naught fearing, swift, brimful of raging life,
Stiffning they lay in pools of jellied gore.

Sometimes, indeed very often, we encounter an altogether purposeless oddness or foreignness of speech. For example, at page 78:

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As in Dodona once, ere driven thence
By Zeus *for that* Rhexergon burnt some oaks.

Mr. Horne will find it impossible to assign a good reason for not here using "because."

Pure vaguenesses of speech abound. For example, page 89:

One central heart wherein
Time beats twin pulses with humanity.

Now and then sentences are rendered needlessly obscure through mere involution; as at page 103:

Star-rays that first played o'er my blinded orbs,
E'en as they glance above the lids of sleep,
Who else had never known surprise, nor hope,
Nor useful action.

Here the "who" has no grammatical antecedent, and would naturally be referred to sleep; whereas it is intended for "me," understood, or involved in the pronoun "my"; as if the sentence were written thus: "rays that first played o'er the blinded orbs of me, who," etc. It is useless to dwell upon so pure an affectation.

The versification throughout is, generally, of a very remarkable excellence. At times, however, it is rough, to no purpose; as at page 44:

And ever tended to some central point
In some place—nought more could I understand.

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And here, at page 81:

The shadow of a stag stoops to the stream,
Swift rolling toward the cataract and drinks deeply.

The above is an unintentional and false Alexandrine, including a foot too much, and that a trochee in place of an iambus. But here, at page 106, we have the utterly unjustifiable anomaly of half a foot too little:

And Eos ever rises, circling
The varied regions of mankind, etc.

All these are mere inadvertences, of course; for the general handling of the rhythm shows the profound metrical sense of the poet. He is, perhaps, somewhat too fond of "making the sound an echo to the sense." *Orion* embodies some of the most remarkable instances of this on record; but if smoothness, if the true rhythm of a verse be sacrificed, the sacrifice is an error. The effect is only a beauty, we think, where no sacrifice is made in its behalf. It will be found possible to reconcile all the objects in view. Nothing can justify such lines as this, at page 69:

As snake-songs 'midst stone hollows thus has taught me.

We might urge, as another minor objection, that all the giants are made to speak in the same manner, with the same phraseology. Their characters are broadly distinctive, while their words are identical in spirit. There is sufficient individuality of sentiment, but little, or none, of language.

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We must object, too, to the personal and political allusions, to the Corn-Law question, for example, to Wellington's statute, etc. These things, of course, have no business in a poem.

We will conclude our fault-finding with the remark that, as a consequence of the one radical error of conception upon which we have commented at length, the reader's attention, throughout, is painfully diverted. He is always pausing, amid poetical beauties, in the expectation of detecting among them some philosophical, allegorical moral. Of course, he does not fully, because he cannot uniquely, appreciate the beauties. The absolute necessity of reperusing the poem, in order thoroughly to comprehend it, is also, most surely, to be regretted, and arises, likewise, from the one radical sin.

But of the beauties of this most remarkable poem, what shall we say? And here we find it a difficult task to be calm. And yet we have never been accused of enthusiastic encomium. It is our deliberate opinion that, in all that regards the loftiest and holiest attributes of the true poetry, *Orion* has never been excelled. Indeed, we feel strongly inclined to say that it has never been equalled. Its imagination—that quality which is all in all—is of the most refined, the most elevating, the most august character. And here we deeply regret that the necessary limits of this review will prevent us from entering, at length, into specifi-

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cation. In reading the poem, we marked passage after passage for extract; but, in the end, we found that we had marked nearly every passage in the book. We can now do nothing more than select a few. This, from page 3, introduces Orion himself, and we quote it, not only as an instance of refined and picturesque imagination, but as evincing the high artistical skill with which a scholar in spirit can paint an elaborate picture by a few brief touches.

The scene in front two sloping mountains' sides
Displayed; in shadow one and one in light.
The loftiest on its summit now sustained
The sunbeams, raying like a mighty wheel
Half seen, which left the forward surface dark
In its full breadth of shade; the coming sun
Hidden as yet behind; the other mount,
Slanting transverse, swept with an eastward face,
Catching the golden light. Now while the peal
Of the ascending chase told that the rout
Still midway rent the thickets, suddenly
Along the broad and sunny slope appeared
The shadow of a stag that fled across
Followed by a giant's shadow with a spear.

These shadows are those of the coming Orion and his game. But who can fail to appreciate the intense beauty of the heralding shadows? Nor is this all. This "Hunter of shadows, he himself a shade," is made symbolical, or suggestive, throughout the poem, of the speculative character of Orion; and, occasionally,

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of his pursuit of visionary happiness. For example, at page 81, Orion, possessed of Merope, dwells with her in a remote and dense grove of cedars. Instead of directly describing his attained happiness, his perfected bliss, the poet, with an exalted sense of art for which we look utterly in vain in any other poem, merely introduces the image of the tamed or subdued shadow-stag, quietly browsing and drinking beneath the cedars.

There, underneath the boughs, mark where the gleam
Of sunrise thro' the roofing's chasm is thrown
Upon a grassy plot below, whereon
The shadow of a stag stoops to the stream,
Swift rolling toward the cataract, and drinks.
Throughout the day unceasingly it drinks,
While ever and anon the nightingale,
Not waiting for the evening, swells his hymn,
His one sustained and heaven-aspiring tone,
And when the sun had vanished utterly,
Arm over arm the cedars spread their shade,
With arching wrist and long extended hands,
And grave-ward fingers lengthening in the moon,
Above that shadowy stag whose antlers still
Hung o'er the stream.

There is nothing more richly, more weirdly, more chastely, more sublimely imaginative in the wide realm of poetical literature. It will be seen that we have enthusiasm, but we reserve it for pictures such as this.

At page 62, Orion, his brother dead, is engaged

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alone in extirpating the beasts from Chios. In the passages we quote, observe, in the beginning, the singular lucidness of detail; the arrangement of the barriers, etc., by which the hunter accomplishes his purpose, is given in a dozen lines of verse, with far more perspicuity than ordinary writers could give it in as many pages of prose. In this species of narration Mr. Horne is approached only by Moore in his *Alciphron*. In the latter portions of our extract observe the vivid picturesqueness of the description.

Four days remain. Fresh trees he felled and wove
More barriers and fences; inaccessible
To fiercest charge of droves, and to o'erleap
Impossible. These walls he so arranged
That to a common centre each should force
The flight of those pursued; and from that centre
Diverged three outlets. One, the wide expanse
Which from the rocks and inland forests led;
One was the clear-skyed windy gap above
A precipice; the third, a long ravine
Which through steep slopes, down to the seashore ran
Winding, and then direct into the sea.

Two days remain. Orion, in each hand
Waving a torch, his course at night began,
Through wildest haunts and lairs of savage beasts.
With long-drawn howl, before him trooped the wolves,
The panthers, terror-stricken, and the bears
With wonder and gruff rage; from desolate crags,
Leering hyenas, griffin, hippogrif,
Skulked, or sprang madly, as the tossing brands

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Flashed through the midnight nooks and hollows cold,
Sudden as fire from flint; o'er crashing thickets,
With crouched head and curled fangs dashed the wild boar,
Gnashing forth on with reckless impulses,
While the clear-purposed fox crept closely down
Into the underwood, to let the storm,
Whate'er its cause, pass over. Through dark fens,
Marshes, green rushy swamps, and margins reedy,
Orion held his way, and rolling shapes
Of serpent and of dragon moved before him
With high-reared crests, swan-like yet terrible,
And often looking back with gem-like eyes.

All night Orion urged his rapid course
In the vexed rear of the swift-droving din,
And when the dawn had peered, the monsters all
Were hemmed in barriers. These he now o'erleaped
With fuel through the day, and when again
Night darkened, and the sea a gulf-like voice
Sent forth, the barriers at all points he fired,
'Mid prayers to Hephæstos and his Ocean-Sire.
Soon as the flames had eaten out a gap
In the great barrier fronting the ravine
That ran down to the sea, Orion grasped
Two blazing boughs; one high in air he raised,
The other, *with its roaring foliage trailed*
Behind him as he sped. Onward the droves
Of frantic creatures with one impulse rolled
Before this night-devouring thing of flames,
With multitudinous voice and downward sweep
Into the sea, which now first knew a tide,
And, ere they made one effort to regain
The shore, had caught them in its flowing arms,

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And bore them past all hope. The living mass,
Dark heaving o'er the waves resistlessly,
At length, in distance, seemed a circle small,
'Midst which one cresture in the centre rose,
Conspicuous in the long, red quivering gleams
That from the dying brands streamed o'er the waves.
It was the oldest dragon of the fens,
Whose forked flag-wings and horn-crested head
O'er crags and marshes regal sway had held;
And now he rose up like an embodied curse,
From all the doomed, fast sinking—some just sunk—
Looked landward o'er the sea, and flapped his vans,
Until Poseidon drew them swirling down.

Poseidon (Neptune) is Orion's father, and lends him his aid. The first line italicized is an example of sound made echo to sense. The rest we have merely emphasized as peculiarly imaginative.

At page 9, Orion thus describes a palace built by him for Hephæstos (Vulcan):

But, ere a shadow-hunter I became,
A dreamer of strange dreams by day and night,
For him I built a palace underground,
Of iron, black and rough as his own hands.
Deep in the groaning disembowelled earth,
The tower-broad pillars and huge stanchions,
And alant supporting wedges I set up,
Aided by the Cyclops who obeyed my voice,
Which through the metal fabric rang and pealed
In orders echoing far, like thunder-dreams.
With arches, galleries, and domes all carved—
So that great figures started from the roof

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*And lofty coignes, or sat and downward gazed
On those who stood below and gazed above—
I filled it; in the centre framed a hall;
Central in that, a throne; and for the light,
Forged mighty hammers that should rise and fall
On slanted rocks of granite and of flint,
Worked by a torrent, for whose passage down
A chasm I hewed. And here the God could take,
Midst showery sparks and swathes of broad gold fire,
His lone repose, lulled by the sounds he loved;
Or, casting back the hammer-heads till they choked
The water's course, enjoy, if so he wished,
Midnight tremendous, silence, and iron sleep.*

The description of the hell in *Paradise Lost* is altogether inferior in graphic effect, in originality, in expression, in the true imagination, to these magnificent—to these unparalleled passages. For this assertion there are tens of thousands who will condemn us as heretical; but there are a “chosen few” who will feel, in their inmost souls, the simple truth of the assertion. The former class would at least be silent, could they form even a remote conception of that contempt with which we hearken to their conventional jargon.

We have room for no further extracts of length; but we refer the reader who shall be so fortunate as to procure a copy of *Orion*, to a passage at page 22, commencing,

One day at noontide, when the chase was done.

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It is descriptive of a group of lolling hounds, intermingled with sylvans, fauns, nymphs, and oceanides. We refer him also to page 25, where Orion, enamored of the naked beauty of Artemis, is repulsed and frozen by her dignity. These lines end thus:

And ere the last collected shape he saw
Of Artemis, dispersing fast amid
Dense vapory clouds, the aching wintriness
Had risen to his teeth, and fixed his eyes,
Like glistening stones in the congealing air.

We refer, especially, too, to the description of love, at page 29; to that of a Bacchanalian orgy, at page 34; to that of drought succeeded by rain, at page 70; and to that of the palace of Eos, at page 104.

Mr. Horne has a very peculiar and very delightful faculty of enforcing, or giving vitality to a picture, by some one vivid and intensely characteristic point or touch. He seizes the most salient feature of his theme, and makes this feature convey the whole. The combined *naïveté* and picturesqueness of some of the passages thus enforced cannot be sufficiently admired. For example:

The archers soon
With bow-arm forward thrust, on all sides twanged
Around, above, below.

Now, it is this thrusting forward of the bow-arm which is the idiosyncrasy of the action of a mass of archers. Again: Rhexergon and his friends endeavor

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to persuade Akinetos to be king. Observe the silent refusal of Akinetos—the peculiar passiveness of his action—if we may be permitted the paradox :

“ Rise, therefore, Akinetos, thou art king! ”
So saying, in his hand he placed a spear.
As though against a wall 't were set aslant,
Flatly the long spear fell upon the ground.

Here again, Merope departs from Chios in a ship :

And, as it sped along, she closely pressed
The rich globes of her bosom on the side
O'er which she bent with those black eyes, and gazed
Into the sea *that fled beneath her face.*

The fleeing of the sea beneath the face of one who gazes into it from a ship's side, is the idiosyncrasy of the action—of the subject. It is that which chiefly impresses the gazer.

We conclude with some brief quotations at random, which we shall not pause to classify. Their merits need no demonstration. They gleam with the purest imagination. They abound in picturesqueness, force, happily chosen epithets, each in itself a picture. They are redolent of all for which a poet will value a poem :

Her silver sandals glanced i' the rays,
As doth a lizard playing on the hill,
And on the spot where she that instant stood
Naught but the bent and quivering grass was seen.

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Above the Isle of Chios, night by night,
The clear moon lingered ever on her course
Covering the forest foliage, where it swept
In its unbroken breadth along the slopes,
With placid silver; edging leaf and trunk
Where gloom clung deep around; but chiefly sought
With melancholy splendor to illumine
The dark-mouthed caverns where Orion lay,
Dreaming among his kinsmen.

The ocean realm below, and all its caves
And bristling vegetation, plant, and flower,
And forests in their dense petrific shade,
Where the tides moan for sleep that never comes.

A faun, who on a quiet green knoll sat
Somewhat apart, sang a melodious ode,
Made rich by harmonies of hidden strings.

Autarces seized a satyr, with intent,
Despite his writhing freaks and furious face,
To dash him on a gong, like that amidst
The struggling mass Encolyon thrust a pine,
Heavy and black as Charon's ferrying pole,
O'er which they, *like a bursting billow*, fell.

Then round the blaze,
Their shadows brandishing afar and athwart
Over the level space and up the hills,
Six giants held portentous dance.

His safe return
To corporal sense, by shaking off these nets
Of moonbeams from his soul.

Old memories
Stumbroualy hung above the purple line

R. H. Horne

Of distance, to the east, while odorously
Glistened the tear-drops of a new-fallen shower.

Sing on!

Sing on, great tempest! in the darkness sing!
Thy madness is a music that brings calm
Into my central soul; and from its waves,
That now with joy begin to heave and gush,
The burning image of all life's desire,
Like an absorbing, fire-breathed, phantom god,
Rises and floats! here touching on the foam,
There hovering o'er it; *ascending swift*
Starward, then sweeping down the hemisphere
Upon the lengthening javelins of the blast!

Now a sound we heard,
Like to some well-known voice in prayer; and next
An iron clang, *that seemed to break great bonds*
Beneath the earth, shook us to conscious life.

It is Oblivion! In his hand—though naught
Knows he of this—a dusky purple flower
Droops over its tall stem. Again! ah see!
He wanders into mist and now is lost!
Within his brain what lovely realms of death
Are pictured, *and what knowledge through the doors*
Of his forgetfulness of all the earth
A path may gain?

But we are positively forced to conclude. It was
our design to give *Orion* a careful and methodical
analysis, thus to bring clearly forth its multitudinous
beauties to the eye of the American public. Our
limits have constrained us to treat it in an imperfect

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and cursory manner. We have had to content ourselves chiefly with assertion, where our original purpose was to demonstrate. We have left unsaid a hundred things which a well-grounded enthusiasm would have prompted us to say. One thing, however, we must and will say, in conclusion: *Orion* will be admitted, by every man of genius, to be one of the noblest, if not the very noblest, poetical work of the age. Its defects are trivial and conventional, its beauties intrinsic and supreme.





Amelia Welby



MRS. AMELIA WELBY has nearly all the imagination of Maria del Occidente, with a more refined taste; and nearly all the passion of Mrs. Norton, with a nicer ear, and (what is surprising) equal art. Very few American poets are at all comparable with her in the true poetic qualities. As for our poetesses (an absurd but necessary word), few of them approach her.

With some modifications, this little poem would do honor to any one living or dead:

The moon within our casement beams,
Our blue-eyed babe hath dropped to sleep,
And I have left it to its dreams
Amid the shadows deep,
To muse beside the silver tide
Whose waves are rippling at thy side.

It is a still and lovely spot
Where they have laid thee down to rest;
The white rose and forget-me-not
Bloom sweetly on thy breast,

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And birds and streams with liquid lull
Have made the stillness beautiful.

And softly thro' the forest bars
 Light lovely shapes, on glossy plumes,
Float ever in, like wingèd stars,
 Amid the purpling glooms;
Their sweet songs, borne from tree to tree,
Thrill the light leaves with melody.

Alas! the very path I trace,
 In happier hours thy footsteps made;
This spot was once thy resting-place;
 Within the silent shade
Thy white hand trained the fragrant bough
That drops its blossoms o'er me now.

'T was here at eve we used to rove;
 'T was here I breathed my whispered vows,
And sealed them on thy lips, my love,
 Beneath the apple-boughs.
Our hearts had melted into one,
But Death undid what Love had done.

Alas! too deep a weight of thought
 Had filled thy heart in youth's sweet hour,—
It seemed with love and bliss o'erfraught;
 As fleeting passion-flower
Unfolding, neath a southern sky,
To blossom soon and soon to die.

Yet in these calm and blooming bowers,
 I seem to see thee still,
Thy breath seems floating o'er the flowers,
 Thy whisper on the hill;

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The clear faint starlight and the sea
Are whispering to my heart of thee.

No more thy smiles my heart rejoice,
Yet still I start to meet thine eye,
And call upon the low sweet voice
That gives me no reply,
And list within my silent door
For the light feet that come no more.

In a critical mood I would speak of these stanzas thus:—The subject was nothing of originality: a widower muses by the grave of his wife. Here then is a great demerit; for originality of theme, if not absolutely first sought, should be sought among the first. Nothing is more clear than this proposition; although denied by the chlorine critics (the grass-green). The desire of the new is an element of the soul. The most exquisite pleasures grow dull in repetition. A strain of music enchants. Heard a second time it pleases. Heard a tenth, it does not displease. We hear it a twentieth, and ask ourselves why we admired. At the fiftieth it induces ennui, at the hundredth, disgust.

Mrs. Welby's theme is, therefore, radically faulty so far as originality is concerned; but of common themes, it is one of the very best among the class *passionate*. True passion is prosaic, homely. Any strong mental emotion stimulates all the mental faculties; thus grief the imagination; but in pro-

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portion as the effect is strengthened, the cause surceases. The excited fancy triumphs; the grief is subdued, chastened, is no longer grief. In this mood we are poetic, and it is clear that a poem now written will be poetic in the exact ratio of its dispassion. A passionate poem is a contradiction in terms. When I say, then, that Mrs. Welby's stanzas are good among the class *passionate* (using the term commonly and falsely applied), I mean that her tone is properly subdued, and is not so much the tone of passion as of a gentle and melancholy regret, interwoven with a pleasant sense of the natural loveliness surrounding the lost in the tomb, and a memory of her human beauty while alive. Elegiac poems should either assume this character, or dwell purely on the beauty (moral or physical) of the departed; or, better still, utter the notes of triumph. I have endeavored to carry out this latter idea in some verses which I have called *Lenore*.

Those who object to the proposition that poetry and passion are discordant, would cite Mrs. Welby's poem as an instance of a passionate one. It is precisely similar to the hundred others which have been cited for like purpose. But it is not passionate; and for this reason (with others having regard to her fine genius) it is poetical. The critics upon this topic display an amusing *ignoratio elenchi*.

Dismissing originality and tone, I pass to the general

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handling, than which nothing could be more pure, more natural, or more judicious. The perfect keeping of the various points is admirable, and the result is entire unity of impression, or effect. The time, a moonlight night; the locality of the grave; the passing thither from the cottage, and the conclusion of the theme with the return to "the silent door"; the babe left, meanwhile, "to its dreams"; the "white rose and forget-me-not" upon the breast of the entombed; the "birds and streams, with liquid lull, that makes the stillness beautiful"; the birds whose songs "thrill the light leaves with melody,"—all these are appropriate and lovely conceptions, only quite unoriginal; and (be it observed) the higher order of genius should, and will, combine the original with that which is natural, not in the vulgar sense (ordinary), but in the artistic sense, which has reference to the general intention of Nature. We have this combination well effected in the lines:

And softly through the forest bars
Light lovely shapes, on glossy plumes,
Float ever in, like wingèd stars,
Amid the purpling glooms,

which are, unquestionably, the finest in the poem.

The reflections suggested by the scene, commencing,

Alas! the very path I trace,

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are, also, something more than merely natural, and are richly ideal; especially the cause assigned for the early death, and "the fragrant bough"

That drops its blossoms o'er me now.

The two concluding stanzas are remarkable examples of common fancies rejuvenated, and etherealized by grace of expression and melody of rhythm.

The "light lovely shapes" in the third stanza (however beautiful in themselves) are defective, when viewed in reference to the "birds" of the stanza preceding. The topic "birds" is dismissed in the one paragraph to be resumed in the other.

"Drops," in the last line of the fourth stanza, is improperly used in an active sense. "To drop" is a neuter verb. An apple drops; we let the apple fall.

The repetition ("seemed," "seem," "seems") in the sixth and seventh stanzas is ungraceful; so also that of "heart," in the last line of the seventh and the first of the eighth. The words "breathed" and "whispered," in the second line of the fifth stanza, have a force too nearly identical. "'Neath," just below, is an awkward contraction. All contractions are awkward. It is no paradox, that the more prosaic the construction of verse the better. Inversions should be dismissed. The most forcible lines are the most direct. Mrs. Welby owes three fourths of her power (so far as style is concerned) to her

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freedom from these vulgar and particularly English errors, elision and inversion. "O'er" is, however, too often used by her in place of "over," and "'t was" for "it was." We see instances here. The only inversions, strictly speaking, are

The moon within our casement beams,
and

Amid the shadows deep.

The versification throughout is unusually good.
Nothing can excel

And birds and streams with liquid lull
Have made the stillness beautiful . . .

And sealed them on thy lips, my love,
Beneath the apple boughs . . .

or the whole of the concluding stanza, if we leave out of view the unpleasant repetition of "And" at the commencement of the third and fifth lines. "Thy white hand trained" (see stanza the fourth) involves four consonants, that unite with difficulty—*ndtr*—and the harshness is rendered more apparent by the employment of the spondee, "hand trained," in place of an iambus. "Melody" is a feeble termination of the third stanza's last line. The syllable "dy" is not full enough to sustain the rhyme. All these endings, liberty, property, happi/y, and the like, however justified by authority, are grossly objectionable. Upon

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the whole, there are some poets in America (Bryant and Sprague, for example) who equal Mrs. Welby in the negative merits of that limited versification which they chiefly affect, the iambic pentameter; but none equal her in the richer and positive merits of rhythmical variety, conception, invention. They, in the old routine, rarely err. She often surprises, and always delights, by novel, rich, and accurate combination of the ancient musical expressions.





Elizabeth Barrett Barrett¹

“ WELL-BRED *man*,” says Sir James Puckle, in his *Gray Cap for a Green Head*, “will never give himself the liberty to speak ill of women.” We emphasize the “man.” Setting aside, for the present, certain rare commentators and compilers of the species, creatures neither precisely men, women, nor Mary Wollstonecrafts,—setting these aside as unclassifiable, we may observe that the race of critics are masculine—men. With the exception, perhaps, of Mrs. Anne Royal, we can call to mind no female who has occupied, even temporarily, the Zoilus throne. And this, the Salic law, is an evil; for the inherent chivalry of the critical man renders it not only an unpleasant task to him “to speak ill of a woman” (and a woman and her book are identical), but an almost impossible task not to laud her *ad nauseam*. In general, therefore, it is

¹ *The Drama of Exile, and Other Poems.* By Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, author of *The Seraphim, and Other Poems.*

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the unhappy lot of the authoress to be subjected, time after time, to the downright degradation of mere puffery. On her own side of the Atlantic, Miss Barrett has indeed, in one instance at least, escaped the infliction of this lamentable contumely and wrong; but if she had been really solicitous of its infliction in America, she could not have adopted a more effectual plan than that of saying a few words about "the great American people," in an American edition of her work, published under the superintendence of an American author.¹ Of the innumerable "native" notices of the *Drama of Exile*, which have come under our observation, we can call to mind not one in which there is anything more remarkable than the critic's dogged determination to find nothing barren, from Beersheba to Dan. Another, in the *Democratic Review*, has proceeded so far, it is true, as to venture a very delicate insinuation to the effect that the poetess "will not fail to speak her mind, though it bring upon her a bad rhyme"; beyond this, nobody has proceeded: and as for the elaborate paper in the new *Whig Monthly*, all that anybody can say or think,

¹ We are sorry to notice, in the American edition, a multitude of typographical errors, many of which affect the sense, and should therefore be corrected in a second impression, if called for. How far they are chargeable to the London copy we are not prepared to say. "Froze," for instance, is printed "froze." "Foregone," throughout is printed "forgone"; "Wordless" is printed "worldless"; "worldly," "wordly"; "split," "spilt," etc., etc., while transpositions, false accents, and mispunctuations abound. We indicate a few pages on which such inadvertences are to be discovered: vol. i.: 23, 26, 37, 45, 53, 56, 80, 166, 174, 180, 185, 251; vol. ii.: 109, 114, 240, 247, 253, 272.

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and all that Miss Barrett can feel respecting it is, that it is an eulogy as well written as it is an insult well intended. Now of all the friends of the fair author, we doubt whether one exists with more profound, with more enthusiastic, reverence and admiration of her genius, than the writer of these words. And it is for this very reason, beyond all others, that he intends to speak of her the truth. Our chief regret is, nevertheless, that the limits of this work will preclude the possibility of our speaking this truth so fully, and so much in detail as we could wish. By far the most valuable criticism that we, or that any one could give, of the volumes now lying before us, would be the quotation of three fourths of their contents. But we have this advantage, that the work has been long published, and almost universally read, and thus, in some measure, we may proceed, concisely, as if the text of our context were an understood thing.

In her preface to this, the "American Edition" of her late poems, Miss Barrett, speaking of the *Drama of Exile*, says: "I decided on publishing it, after considerable hesitation and doubt. Its subject rather fastened on me than was chosen; and the form, approaching the model of the Greek tragedy, shaped itself under my hand rather by force of pleasure than of design. But when the compositional excitement had subsided, I felt afraid of my position. My own object was the new and strange experience of the



Elizabeth Barrett Browning

from a painting in the National Portrait Gallery, London

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery, London.



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fallen Humanity, as it went forth from Paradise in the Wilderness, with a peculiar reference to Eve's allotted grief, which, considering that self-sacrifice belonged to her womanhood, and the consciousness of being the organ of the Fall to her offence, appeared to me imperfectly apprehended hitherto, and more expressible by a woman than by a man." In this abstract announcement of the theme, it is difficult to understand the ground of the poet's hesitation to publish; for the theme in itself seems admirably adapted to the purposes of the closest drama. The poet, nevertheless, is very properly conscious of failure, a failure which occurs not in the general, but in the particular conception, and which must be placed to the account of "the model of the Greek tragedies." The Greek tragedies had and even have high merits; but we act wisely in now substituting for the external and typified human sympathy of the antique Chorus a direct, internal, living, and moving sympathy itself; and although Æschylus might have done service as "a model" to either Euripides or Sophocles, yet, were Sophocles and Euripides in London to-day, they would perhaps, while granting a certain formless and shadowy grandeur, indulge a quiet smile at the shallowness and uncouthness of that art which, in the old amphitheatres, had beguiled them into applause of the *Oedipus at Colonos*.

It would have been better for Miss Barrett, if,

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throwing herself independently upon her own very extraordinary resources, and forgetting that a Greek had ever lived, she had involved her Eve in a series of adventures merely natural, or, if not this, of adventures preternatural within the limits of at least a conceivable relation, a relation of matter to spirit and spirit to matter, that should have left room for something like palpable action and comprehensible emotion, that should not have utterly precluded the development of that womanly character which is admitted as the principal object of the poem. As the case actually stands, it is only in a few snatches of verbal intercommunication with Adam and Lucifer that we behold her as a woman at all. For the rest, she is a mystical something or nothing, enwrapped in a fog of rhapsody about the Transfiguration, and the Seed, and the Bruising of the Heel, and other talk of a nature that no man ever pretended to understand in plain prose, and which, when solar-microscoped into poetry "upon the model of the Greek drama," is about as convincing as the Egyptian Lectures of Mr. Silk Buckingham, about as much to any purpose under the sun as the *hi presto* / conjurations of Signor Blitz. What are we to make, for example, of dramatic colloquy such as this?—the words are those of a Chorus of Invisible Angels addressing Adam:

Live, work on, O Earthy!
By the Actual's tension,

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Speed the arrow worthy
Of a pure ascension!
From the low earth round you
Reach the heights above you:
From the stripes that wound you
Seek the loves that love you!
God's divinest burneth plain
Through the crystal diaphane
Of our loves that love you.

Now we do not mean to assert that, by excessive "tension" of the intellect, a reader accustomed to the cant of the transcendentalists (or of those who degrade an ennobling philosophy by styling themselves such) may not succeed in ferreting from the passage quoted, and indeed from each of the thousand similar ones throughout the book, something that shall bear the aspect of an absolute idea; but we do mean to say, first, that in nine cases out of ten, the thought when dug out will be found very poorly to repay the labor of the digging; for it is the nature of thought in general, as it is the nature of some ores in particular, to be richest when most superficial. And we do mean to say, secondly, that in nineteen cases out of twenty, the reader will suffer the most valuable ore to remain unmined to all eternity before he will be put to the trouble of digging for it one inch. And we do mean to assert, thirdly, that no reader is to be condemned for not putting himself to the trouble of digging even the one inch; for no writer has the right to impose

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any such necessity upon him. What is worth thinking is distinctly thought; what is distinctly thought can, and should be, distinctly expressed, or should not be expressed at all. Nevertheless, there is no more appropriate opportunity than the present for admitting and maintaining at once, what has never before been either maintained or admitted, that there is a justifiable exception to the rule for which we contend. It is where the design is to convey the fantastic, not the obscure. To give the idea of the latter we need, as in general, the most precise and definite terms, and those who employ other terms but confound obscurity of expression with the expression of obscurity. The fantastic in itself, however,—phantasm,—may be materially furthered in its development by the quaint in phraseology, a proposition which any moralist may examine at his leisure for himself.

The *Drama of Exile* opens with a very palpable bull: "Scene, the outer side of the gate of Eden, shut fast with clouds [a scene out of sight!] from the depth of which revolves the sword of fire, self-moved. A watch of innumerable angels, rank above rank, slopes up from around it to the zenith; and the glare cast from their brightness and from the sword, extends many miles into the wilderness. Adam and Eve are seen in the distance, flying along the glare. The angel Gabriel and Lucifer are beside the gate." These are the "stage directions" which greet us on the

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threshold of the book. We complain first of the bull; secondly, of the blue-fire melodramatic aspect of the revolving sword; thirdly, of the duplicate nature of the sword, which, if steel, and sufficiently inflamed to do service in burning, would, perhaps, have been in no temper to cut; and on the other hand, if sufficiently cool to have an edge, would have accomplished little in the way of scorching a personage so well accustomed to fire and brimstone, and all that, as we have very good reason to believe Lucifer was. We cannot help objecting, too, to the "innumerable angels," as a force altogether disproportioned to the one enemy to be kept out; either the self-moving sword itself, we think, or the angel Gabriel alone, or five or six of the "innumerable" angels, would have sufficed to keep the Devil (or is it Adam?) outside of the gate, which, after all, he might not have been able to discover on account of the clouds.

Far be it from us, however, to dwell irreverently on matters which have venerability in the faith or in the fancy of Miss Barrett. We allude to these *néaiseries* at all, found here in the very first paragraph of her poem, simply by way of putting in the clearest light the mass of inconsistency and antagonism in which her subject has inextricably involved her. She has made allusion to Milton, and no doubt felt secure in her theme (as a theme merely) when she considered his *Paradise Lost*. But even in Milton's own day,

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when men had the habit of believing all things, the more nonsensical the more readily, and of worshipping in blind acquiescence the most preposterous of impossibilities—even then there were not wanting individuals who would have read the great epic with more zest, could it have been explained to their satisfaction how and why it was, not only that a snake quoted Aristotle's ethics, and behaved otherwise pretty much as he pleased, but that bloody battles were continually being fought between bloodless "innumerable angels," that found no inconvenience in losing a wing one minute and a head the next, and, if pounded up into puff-paste late in the afternoon, were as good "innumerable angels" as new the next morning, in time to be at *réveille* roll-call. And now, at the present epoch, there are few people who do not occasionally think. This is emphatically the thinking age; indeed it may very well be questioned whether mankind ever substantially thought before. The fact is, if the *Paradise Lost* were written to-day (assuming that it had never been written when it was), not even its eminent, although overestimated merits would counterbalance, either in the public view or in the opinion of any critic at once intelligent and honest, the multitudinous incongruities which are part and parcel of its plot.

But in the plot of the drama of Miss Barrett it is something even worse than incongruity which affronts,—a continuous mystical strain of ill-fitting and ex-

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aggregated allegory if, indeed, allegory is not much too respectable a term for it. We are called upon, for example, to sympathize in the whimsical woes of two spirits, who, upspringing from the bowels of the earth, set immediately to bewailing their miseries in jargon such as this:

I am the spirit of the harmless earth.
God spake me softly out among the stars,
As softly as a blessing of much worth;
And then his smile did follow unawares,
That all things fashioned so for use and duty
Might shine anointed with his chrism of beauty—
Yet I wail!
I drave on with the worlds exultingly,
Obliquely down the Godlight's gradual fall;
Individual aspect and complexity
Of gyratory orb and interval
Lost in the fluent motion of delight
Toward the high ends of Being beyond sight—
Yet I wail!

Innumerable other spirits discourse successively after the same fashion, each ending every stanza of his lamentation with the "Yet I wail!" When at length they have fairly made an end, Eve touches Adam upon the elbow, and hazards, also, the profound and pathetic observation, "Lo, Adam, they wail!" which is nothing more than the simple truth, for they do, and God deliver us from any such wailing again!

It is not our purpose, however, to demonstrate what

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every reader of these volumes will have readily seen self-demonstrated — the utter indefensibility of the *Drama of Exile*, considered uniquely as a work of art. We have none of us to be told that a medley of metaphysical recitatives, sung out of tune at Adam and Eve by all manner of inconceivable abstractions, is not exactly the best material for a poem. Still it may very well happen that among this material there shall be individual passages of great beauty. But should any one doubt the possibility, let him be satisfied by a single extract such as follows:

On a mountain peak
Half sheathed in primal woods and glittering
In spasms of awful sunshine at that hour,
A lion couched, part raised upon his paws,
With his calm massive face turned full on thine,
And his mane listening. When the ended curse
Left silence in the world, right suddenly
He sprang up rampant and stood straight and stiff,
As if the new reality of death
Were dashed against his eyes, and roared so fierce
(Such thick carnivorous passion in his throat
Tearing a passage through the wrath and fear),
And roared so wild, and smote from all the hills
Such fast keen echoes crumbling down the vales
To distant silence,—that the forest beasts,
One after one, did mutter a response
In savage and in sorrowful complaint
Which trailed along the gorges.

There is an Homeric force here, a vivid picturesque—

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ness which all men will appreciate and admire. It is, however, the longest quotable passage in the drama not disfigured with blemishes of importance, although there are many, very many passages of a far loftier order of excellence so disfigured, and which, therefore, it would not suit our immediate purpose to extract. The truth is, and it may be as well mentioned at this point as elsewhere, that we are not to look in Miss Barrett's works for any examples of what has been occasionally termed "sustained effort"; for neither are there, in any of her poems, any long commendable paragraphs, nor are there any individual compositions which will bear the slightest examination as consistent art-products. Her wild and magnificent genius seems to have contented itself with points, to have exhausted itself in flashes; but it is the profusion, the unparalleled number and close propinquity of these points and flashes which render her book one flame, and justify us in calling her, unhesitatingly, the greatest, the most glorious of her sex.

The *Drama of Exile* calls for little more, in the way of comment, than what we have generally said. Its finest particular feature is, perhaps, the rapture of Eve, rapture bursting through despair, upon discovering that she still possesses, in the unwavering love of Adam, an undreamed-of and priceless treasure. The poem ends, as it commences, with a bull. The last sentence gives us to understand that "there is a

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sound through the silence, as of the falling tears of an angel." How there can be sound during silence, and how an audience are to distinguish, by such sound, angel tears from any other species of tears, it may be as well, perhaps, not too particularly to inquire.

Next, in length, to the *Drama* is *A Vision of Poets*. We object to the didacticism of its design, which the poetess thus states: "I have attempted to express here my view of the mission of the veritable poet—of the self-abnegation implied in it, of the uses of sorrow suffered in it, of the great work accomplished in it through suffering, and of the duty and glory of what Balzac has beautifully and truly called *la patience angélique du génie*." This "view" may be correct, but neither its correctness nor its falsity has anything to do with a poem. If a thesis is to be demonstrated, we need prose for its demonstration. In this instance, so far as the allegorical instruction and argumentation are lost sight of, in the upper current, so far as the main admitted intention of the work is kept out of view, so far only is the work a poem, and so far only is the poem worth notice, or worthy of its author. Apart from its poetical character, the composition is thoughtful, vivid, epigrammatic, and abundant in just observation, although the critical opinions introduced are not always our own. A reviewer in *Blackwood's Magazine* quoting many

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of these critical portraits, takes occasion to find fault with the grammar of this tristich:

Here Æschylus, the women swooned
To see so awful, when he frowned
As the gods did: he standeth crowned.

“What on earth,” says the critic, “are we to make of the words ‘the women swooned to see so awful’? . . . The syntax will punish future commentators as much as some of his own corrupt choruses.” In general we are happy to agree with this reviewer, whose decisions respecting the book are, upon the whole, so nearly coincident with ours that we hesitated, through fear of repetition, to undertake a critique at all, until we considered that we might say a very great deal in simply supplying his omissions; but he frequently errs through mere hurry, and never did he err more singularly than at the point now in question. He evidently supposes that “awful” has been misused as an adverb and made referable to “women.” But not so; and although the construction of the passage is unjustifiably involute, its grammar is intact. Disentangling the construction, we make this evident at once. “Here Æschylus (he) standeth crowned (whom) the women swooned to see so awful, when he frowned as the gods did.” The “he” is excessive, and the “whom” is understood. Respecting the lines,

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Euripides, with close and mild
Scholastic lips, that could be wild,
And laugh or sob out like a child
Right in the classes,

the critic observes: " 'Right in the classes' throws our intellect completely upon its beam-ends." But, if so, the fault possibly lies in the crankness of the intellect; for the words themselves mean merely that Euripides laughed or cried like a schoolboy, like a child right (or just) in his classes, one who had not yet left school. The phrase is affected, we grant, but quite intelligible. A still more remarkable misapprehension occurs in regard to the triplet,

And Goethe, with that reaching eye
His soul reached out from, far and high,
And fell from inner entity.

The reviewer's remarks upon this are too preposterous not to be quoted in full; we doubt if any commentator of equal dignity ever so egregiously committed himself before. "Goethe," he says, "is a perfect enigma; what does the word 'fell' mean? *δεινός* we suppose, that is, 'not to be trifled with.' But surely it sounds very strange, although it may be true enough, to say that his 'fellness' is occasioned by 'inner entity.' But perhaps the line has some deeper meaning which we are unable to fathom." Perhaps it has: and this is the criticism, the British criticism, the *Blackwood* criticism, to which we have so

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long implicitly bowed down! As before, Miss Barrett's verses are needlessly involved, but their meaning requires no Œdipus. Their construction is thus intended: "And Goethe, with that reaching eye from which his soul reached out, far and high, and (in so reaching) fell from inner entity." The plain prose is this: Goethe (the poet would say), in involving himself too far and too profoundly in external speculations, speculations concerning the world without him, neglected or made miscalculations concerning his inner entity, or being,—concerning the world within. This idea is involved in the metaphor of a person leaning from a window so far that finally he falls from it; the person being the soul, the window the eye.

Of the twenty-eight *Sonnets*, which immediately succeed the *Drama of Exile*, and which receive the especial commendation of *Blackwood*, we have no very enthusiastic opinion. The best sonnet is objectionable from its extreme artificiality; and, to be effective, this species of composition requires a minute management, a well-controlled dexterity of touch, compatible neither with Miss Barrett's deficient constructiveness, nor with the fervid rush and whirl of her genius. Of the particular instances here given, we prefer *The Prisoner*, of which the conclusion is particularly beautiful. In general, the themes are obtrusively metaphysical or didactic.

The Romaunt of the Page, an imitation of the old

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English ballad, is neither very original in subject, nor very skilfully put together. We speak comparatively, of course; it is not very good—for Miss Barrett; and what we have said of this poem will apply equally to a very similar production, *Rhyme of the Duchess May*. *The Poet and the Bird*, *A Child Asleep*, *Crowned and Wedded*, *Crowned and Buried*, *To Flush, my Dog*, *The Fourfold Aspect*, *A Flower in a Letter*, *A Lay of the Early Rose*, *That Day*, *L. E. L.'s Last Question*, *Catrina to Camoens*, *Wine of Cyprus*, *The Dead Pan*, *Sleeping and Watching*, *A Portrait*, *The Mournful Mother*, and *A Valediction*, although all burning with divine fire, manifested only in scintillations, have nothing in them idiosyncratic. *The House of Clouds* and *The Lost Bower* are superlatively lovely, and show the vast powers of the poet in the field best adapted to their legitimate display; the themes, here, could not be improved. The former poem is purely imaginative; the latter is unobjectionably because obtrusively suggestive of a moral, and is, perhaps, upon the whole, the most admirable composition in the two volumes, or, if it is not, then *The Lay of the Brown Rosary* is. In this last the ballad-character is elevated, etherealized, and thus made to afford scope for an ideality at once the richest and most vigorous in the world. The peculiar foibles of the author are here, too, dropped bodily, as a mantle, in the tumultuous movement and excitement of the narrative.

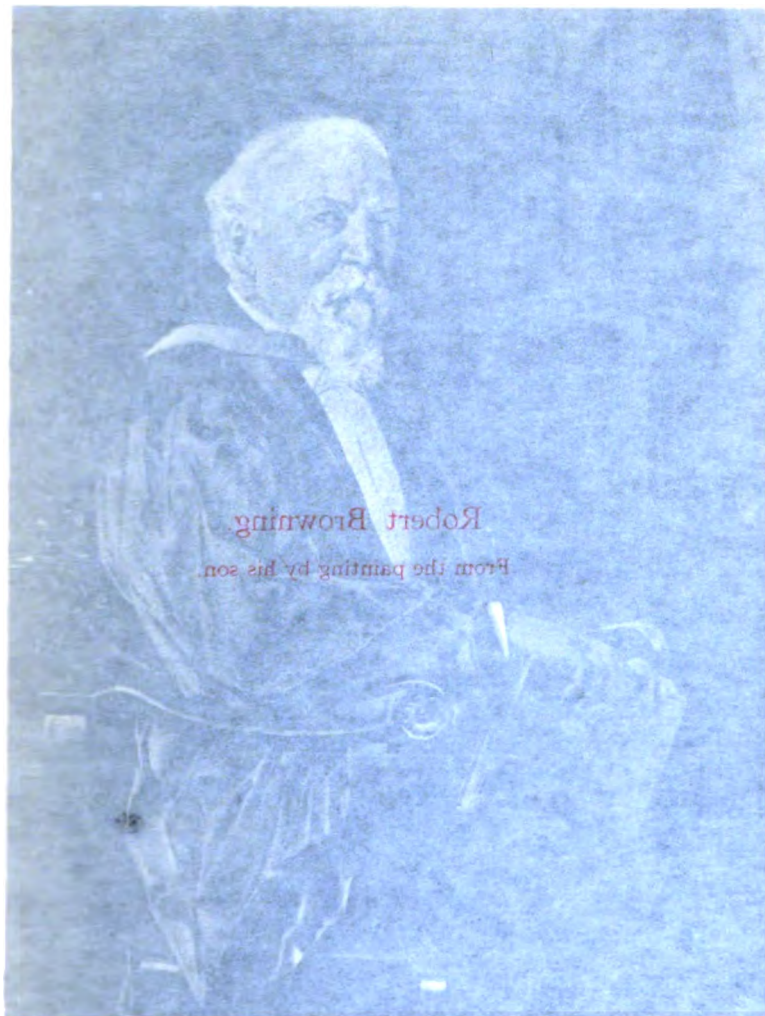
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Miss Barrett has need only of real self-interest in her subjects to do justice to her subjects and to herself. On the other hand, *A Rhapsody of Life's Progress*, although gleaming with cold coruscations, is the least meritorious, because the most philosophical, effusion of the whole: this, we say, in flat contradiction of the *spoudiotaton kai philosophikotaton genos* of Aristotle. *The Cry of the Human* is singularly effective, not more from the vigor and ghastly passion of its thought than from the artistically conceived *arabesquerie* of its rhythm. *The Cry of the Children*, similar, although superior in tone and handling, is full of a nervous, unflinching energy—a horror sublime in its simplicity—of which a far greater than Dante might have been proud. *Bertha in the Lane*, a rich ballad, very singularly excepted from the wholesale commendation of the *Democratic Review* as “perhaps not one of the best,” and designated by *Blackwood*, on the contrary, as “decidedly the finest poem of the collection,” is not the very best, we think, only because mere pathos, however exquisite, cannot be ranked with the loftiest exhibitions of the ideal. Of *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*, the magazine last quoted observes that “some pith is put forth in its passionate parts.” We will not pause to examine the delicacy or lucidity of the metaphor embraced in the “putting forth of some pith”; but unless by “some pith” itself is intended the

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utmost conceivable intensity and vigor, then the critic is merely damning with faint praise. With the exception of Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*, we have never perused a poem combining so much of the fiercest passion with so much of the most ethereal fancy as the *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* of Miss Barrett. We are forced to admit, however, that the latter work is a very palpable imitation of the former, which it surpasses in plot, or rather in thesis, as much as it falls below it in artistical management, and a certain calm energy, lustrous and indomitable, such as we might imagine in a broad river of molten gold.

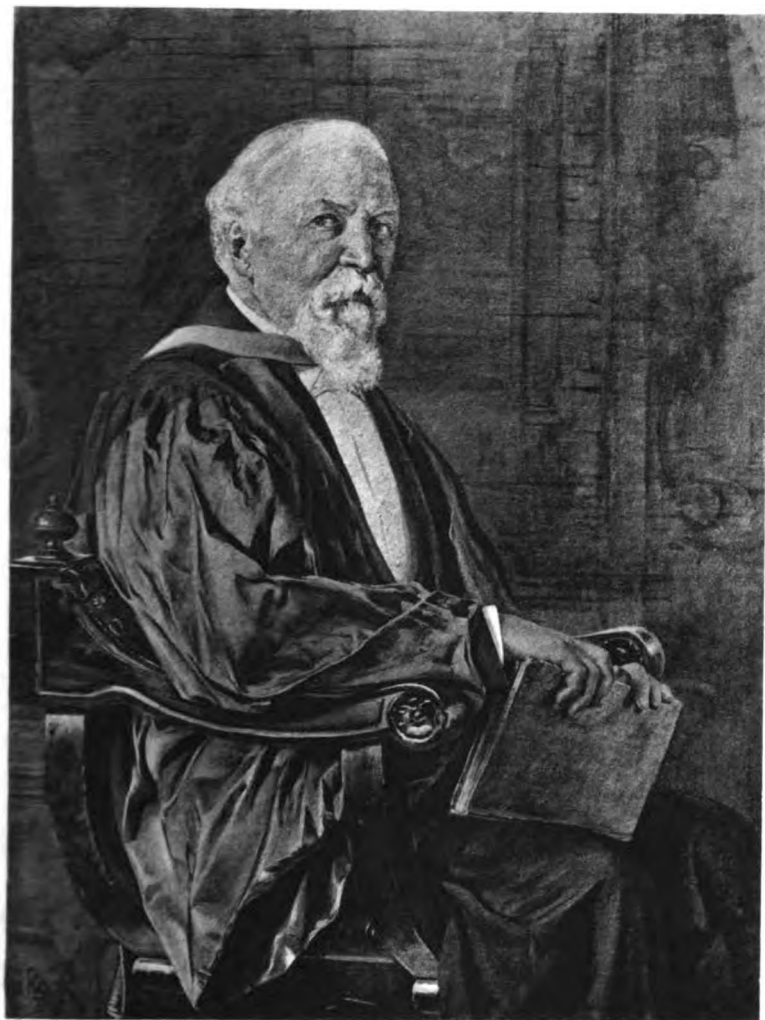
It is in the *Lady Geraldine* that the critic of *Blackwood* is again put at fault in the comprehension of a couple of passages. He confesses his inability "to make out the construction of the words, 'All that spirits pure and ardent are cast out of love and reverence, because chancing not to hold.'" There are comparatively few American schoolboys who could not parse it. The prosaic construction would run thus: "All that (wealth understood) because chancing not to hold which (or on account of not holding which), all pure and ardent spirits are cast out of love and reverence." The "which" is involved in the relative pronoun "that," the second word of the sentence. All that we know is, that Miss Barrett is right; here is a parallel phrase, meaning "all that (which) we know," etc. The fact is, that the accusation of imperfect



...the critic
...With the ex-
...we have never
...of the fiercest
...fancy as
...Mr. Corbett. We
...the latter work is
...of the former, which it sur-
...as much as it falls
...and a certain calm
...such as we might
...of the world.

Robert Browning

From the painter's responsibility "to
...of the words, 'All that
...out of love and rever-
...to hold.'" There are
...schoolboys who could
...construction would run
thus: "All that (because chancing
...of not holding which),
...out of love and
...is involved in the relative
...of the sentence. All
...part is right; here is a
...which) we know,"
The fact is, that the accusation of imperfect



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grammar would have been more safely, if more generally, urged; in descending to particular exceptions, the reviewer has been doing little more than exposing himself at all points.

Turning aside, however, from grammar, he declares his incapacity to fathom the meaning of

She has halls and she has castles, and the resonant steam-eagles

*Follow far on the directing of her floating dove-like hand—
With a thunderous vapor trailing underneath the starry vigils,
So to mark upon the blasted heaven the measure of her land.*

Now it must be understood that he is profoundly serious in his declaration; he really does not apprehend the thought designed, and he is even more than profoundly serious, too, in intending these his own comments upon his own stolidity, for wit: "We thought that steam-coaches generally followed the directing of no hand except the stoker's, but it, certainly, is always much liker a raven than a dove." After this, who shall question the infallibility of Christopher North? We presume there are very few of our readers who will not easily appreciate the richly imaginative conception of the poetess: The Lady Geraldine is supposed to be standing in her own door (positively not on the top of an engine), and thence pointing, "with her floating dove-like hand," to the lines of vapor, from the "resonant steam-eagles," that designate upon the "blasted heaven" the remote boundaries of her domain. But, perhaps, we are

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guilty of a very gross absurdity ourselves, in commenting at all upon the whimsicalities of a reviewer who can deliberately select for special animadversion the second of the four verses we here copy:

"Eyes," he said, "now throbbing through me! are ye eyes that did undo me?"

Shining eyes like antique jewels set in Parian statue-stone!

Underneath that calm white forehead are ye ever burning
torrid

O'er the desolate sand desert of my heart and life undone?"

The ghost of the Great Frederick might, to be sure, quote at us, in his own Latin, his favorite adage, *De gustibus non est disputandum*; but, when we take into consideration the moral designed, the weirdness of effect intended, and the historical adaptation of the fact alluded to, in the line italicized (a fact of which it is by no means impossible that the critic is ignorant), we cannot refrain from expressing our conviction, and we here express it in the teeth of the whole horde of the Ambrosianians, that from the entire range of poetical literature there shall not, in a century, be produced a more sonorous, a more vigorous verse, a juster, a nobler, a more ideal, a more magnificent image, than this very image, in this very verse, which the most noted magazine of Europe has so especially and so contemptuously condemned.

The *Lady Geraldine* is, we think, the only poem of its author which is not deficient, considered as an

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artistical whole. Her constructive ability, as we have already suggested, is either not very remarkable, or has never been properly brought into play; in truth, her genius is too impetuous for the minuter technicalities of that elaborate art so needful in the building up of pyramids for immortality. This deficiency, then, if there be any such, is her chief weakness. Her other foibles, although some of them are, in fact, glaring, glare, nevertheless, to no very material ill purpose. There are none which she will not readily dismiss in her future works. She retains them now, perhaps, because unaware of their existence.

Her affectations are unquestionably many, and generally inexcusable. We may, perhaps, tolerate such words as "blé," "chrysm," "nympholeptic," "œnomel," and "chrysopras"; they have at least the merit either of distinct meaning, or of terse and sonorous expression; but what can be well said in defence of the unnecessary nonsense of "'ware" for "aware"; of "'bide" for "abide"; of "'gins" for "begins"; of "'las" for "alas"; of "oftly," "ofter," and "oftest," for "often," "more often," and "most often"; or of "erelong" in the sense of "long ago"? That there is authority for the mere words proves nothing; those who employed them in their day would not employ them if writing now. Although we grant, too, that the poetess is very usually Homeric in her compounds, there is no intelligibility of

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construction, and therefore no force of meaning, in "dew-pallid," "pale-passioned," and "silver-solemn." Neither have we any partiality for "drave" or "supreme," or "lament"; and, while upon this topic, we may as well observe that there are few readers who do anything but laugh, or stare, at such phrases as "L. E. L.'s Last Question," "The Cry of the Human," "Leaning from my human," "Heaven assist the human," "the full sense of your mortal," "a grave for your divine," "falling off from our created," "he sends this gage for thy pity's counting," "they could not press their futures on the present of her courtesy," or "could another fairer lack to thee, lack to thee?" There are few, at the same time, who do not feel disposed to weep outright when they hear of such things as "Hope withdrawing her peradventure," "spirits dealing in pathos of antithesis," "angels in antagonism to God and his reflex beatitudes," "songs of glories ruffling down doorways," "God's possibles," and "rules of Mandom."

We have already said, however, that mere quaintness, within reasonable limit, is not only not to be regarded as affectation, but has its proper artistic uses in aiding a fantastic effect. We quote from the lines, *To Flush, my Dog*, a passage in exemplification:

Leap! thy broad tail waves a light!
Leap! thy tender feet are bright,
Canopied in fringes;

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Leap! those tasselled ears of thine
Flicker strangely, fair and fine,
Down their golden inches!

And again—from the song of a tree-spirit, in the
Drama of Exile:

The divine impulsion cleaves
In dim movements to the leaves
Dropt and lifted, dropt and lifted,
In the sunlight greenly sifted,—
In the sunlight and the moonlight
Greenly sifted through the trees,
Ever wave the Eden trees,
In the nightlight and the noonlight,
With a ruffling of green branches,
Shaded off to resonances,
Never stirred by rain or breeze.

The thoughts, here, belong to the highest order of poetry, but they could not have been wrought into effective expression without the instrumentality of those repetitions, those unusual phrases—in a word, those quaintnesses, which it has been too long the fashion to censure, indiscriminately, under the one general head of “affectation. No true poet will fail to be enraptured with the two extracts above quoted; but we believe there are few who would not find a difficulty in reconciling the psychal impossibility of refraining from admiration with the too-hastily attained conviction that, critically, there is nothing to admire.

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Occasionally we meet in Miss Barrett's poems a certain far-fetchedness of imagery, which is reprehensible in the extreme. What, for example, are we to think of

Now he hears the angel voices
Folding silence in the room ?—

undoubtedly, that it is nonsense, and no more; or of

How the silence round you shivers
While our voices through it go ?—

again, unquestionably, that it is nonsense, and nothing beyond.

Sometimes we are startled by knotty paradoxes; and it is not acquitting their perpetrator of all blame on their account to admit that, in some instances, they are susceptible of solution. It is really difficult to discover anything for approbation in enigmas such as,

That bright impassive, passive angel-hood,

or,

The silence of my heart is full of sound.

At long intervals we are annoyed by specimens of repulsive imagery, as where the children cry:

How long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand to move the world, *on a child's heart*—
Stifle down with a malled heel its palpitation? etc.

Now, and then, too, we are confounded by a pure platitude, as when Eve exclaims:

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Leave us not
In agony beyond what we can bear,
And in debasement *below thunder-mark!*

or, when the Saviour is made to say:

So, at last!
He shall look round on you *with lids too straight*
To hold the grateful tears.

"Strait" was, no doubt, intended, but does not materially elevate, although it slightly elucidates, the thought. A very remarkable passage is that, also, wherein Eve bids the infant voices

Hear the steep generations, how they fall
Adown the visionary stairs of Time,
Like supernatural thunders—far, yet near,
Sowing their fiery echoes through the hills!

Here, saying nothing of the affectation in "adown" not alluding to the insoluble paradox of "far yet near"; not mentioning the inconsistent metaphor involved in the "sowing of fiery echoes"; adverting but slightly to the misusage of "like," in place of "as," and to the impropriety of making anything fall like thunder, which has never been known to fall at all; merely hinting, too, at the misapplication of "steep" to the "generations" instead of to the "stairs,"—a perversion in no degree to be justified by the fact that so preposterous a figure as synecdoche exists in the school-books;—letting these things pass for the present, we shall still find it difficult to understand how Miss

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Barrett should have been led to think that the principal idea itself—the abstract idea, the idea of tumbling down-stairs, in any shape, or under any circumstances—either a poetical or a decorous conception. And yet we have seen this very passage quoted as “sublime,” by a critic who seems to take it for granted, as a general rule, that Nat-Leeism is the loftiest order of literary merit. That the lines very narrowly missed sublimity, we grant; that they came within a step of it, we admit; but, unhappily, the step is the one step which, time out of mind, has intervened between the sublime and the ridiculous. So true is this, that any person—that even we, with a very partial modification of the imagery, a modification that shall not interfere with its richly spiritual tone, may elevate the quotation into unexceptionability. For example, and we offer it with profound deference:

Hear the far generations—how they crash,
From crag to crag, down the precipitous Time,
In multitudinous thunders that upstartle,
Aghast, the echoes from their cavernous lairs
In the visionary hills!

We have no doubt that our version has its faults; but it has, at least, the merit of consistency. Not only is a mountain more poetical than a pair of stairs, but echoes are more appropriately typified as wild beasts than as seeds; and echoes and wild beasts agree better with a mountain, than does a pair of stairs

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with the sowing of seeds; even admitting that these seeds be seeds of fire, and be sown broadcast "among the hills," by a steep generation, while in the act of tumbling down the stairs; that is to say, of coming down the stairs in too violent a hurry to be capable of sowing the seeds as accurately as all seeds should be sown; nor is the matter rendered any better for Miss Barrett, even if the construction of her sentence is to be understood as implying that the fiery seeds were sown not immediately by the steep generations that tumbled down the stairs, but mediately, through the intervention of the "supernatural thunders" that were occasioned by the "steep generations" that tumbled down the stairs.

The poetess is not unfrequently guilty of repeating herself. The "thunder cloud veined by lightning" appears, for instance, on pages 34 of the first, and 228 of the second volume. The "silver clash of wings" is heard at pages 53 of the first, and 269 of the second; and angel tears are discovered to be falling as well at page 27 as at the conclusion of the *Drama of Exile*. Steam, too, in the shape of Death's White Horse, comes upon the ground, both at page 244 of the first, and 179 of the second volume, and there are multitudinous other repetitions, both of phrase and idea, but it is the excessive reiteration of pet words which is, perhaps, the most obtrusive of the minor errors of the poet. "Chrystalline," "Apocalypse,"

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"foregone," "evangel," "'ware," "throb," "level," "loss," and the musical term "minor," are forever upon her lips. The chief favorites, however, are "down" and "leaning," which are echoed and re-echoed not only *ad infinitum*, but in every whimsical variation of import. As Miss Barrett certainly cannot be aware of the extent of this mannerism, we will venture to call her attention to a few, comparatively a very few, examples:

Peeling *down* the depths of Godhead . . .
Smiling *down* as Venus *down* the waves . . .
Smiling *down* the steep world very purely . . .
Down the purple of this chamber . . .
Moving *down* the hidden depths of loving . . .
Cold the sun shines *down* the door . . .
Which brought angels *down* our talk . . .
Let your souls behind you *lean* gently moved . . .
But angels *leaning* from the golden seats . . .
And melancholy *leaning* out of heaven . . .
And I know the heavens are *leaning* down . . .
Then over the casement she *leaneth* . . .
Forbear that dream, too near to heaven it *leaned* . . .
I would *lean* my spirit o'er you . . .
Thou, O sapient angel, *leanest* o'er . . .
Shapes of brightness *overlean* thee . . .
They are *leaning* their young heads . . .
Out of heaven shall o'er you *lean* . . .
While my spirit *leans* and reaches . . .
etc., etc., etc.

In the matter of grammar, upon which the Edin-

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burgh critic insists so pertinaciously, the author of the *Drama of Exile* seems to us even peculiarly without fault. The nature of her studies has, no doubt, imbued her with a very delicate instinct of constructive accuracy. The occasional uses of phrases so questionable as "from whence," and the far-fetchedness and involution of which we have already spoken, are the only noticeable blemishes of an exceedingly chaste, vigorous, and comprehensive style.

In her inattention to rhythm, Miss Barrett is guilty of an error that might have been fatal to her fame, that would have been fatal to any reputation less solidly founded than her own. We do not allude so particularly to her multiplicity of inadmissible rhymes. We would wish, to be sure, that she had not thought proper to couple "Eden" and "succeeding," "glories" and "floorwise," "burning" and "morning," "thither" and "æther," "enclose me" and "across me," "misdoers" and "flowers," "centre" and "winter," "guerdon" and "pardon," "conquer" and "anchor," "desert" and "unmeasured," "atoms" and "fathoms," "opal" and "people," "glory" and "doorway," "trumpet" and "accompted," "taming" and "overcame him," "coming" and "woman," "is" and "trees," "off" and "sunproof," "eagles" and "vigils," "nature" and "satire," "poems" and "interflowings," "certes" and "virtues," "pardon" and "burden," "thereat" and "great," "children" and

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"bewildering," "mortal" and "turtle," "moonshine" and "sunshine." It would have been better, we say, if such apologies for rhymes as these had been rejected. But deficiencies of rhythm are more serious. In some cases it is nearly impossible to determine what metre is intended. *The Cry of the Children* cannot be scanned; we never saw so poor a specimen of verse. In imitating the rhythm of *Locksley Hall*, the poetess has preserved with accuracy (so far as mere syllables are concerned) the forcible line of seven trochees with a final cæsura. The "double rhymes" have only the force of a single long syllable, a cæsura; but the natural rhythmical division, occurring at the close of the fourth trochee, should never be forced to occur, as Miss Barrett constantly forces it, in the middle of a word, or of an indivisible phrase. If it do so occur, we must sacrifice, in perusal, either the sense or the rhythm. If she will consider, too, that this line of seven trochees and a cæsura is nothing more than two lines written in one—a line of four trochees, succeeded by one of three trochees and a cæsura—she will at once see how unwise she has been in composing her poem in quatrains of the long line with alternate rhymes instead of immediate ones, as is the case of *Locksley Hall*. The result is, that the ear, expecting the rhymes before they occur, does not appreciate them when they do. These points, however, will be best

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exemplified by transcribing one of the quatrains in its natural arrangement. That actually employed is addressed only to the eye.

Oh, she fluttered like a tame bird
In among its forest brothers
Far too strong for it! then, drooping,
Bowed her face upon her hands,
And I spake out wildly, fiercely,
Brutal truths of her and others!
I, she planted in the desert,
Swathed her, wind-like, with my sands.

Here it will be seen that there is a paucity of rhyme, and that it is expected at closes where it does not occur. In fact, if we consider the eight lines as two independent quatrains (which they are), then we find them entirely rhymeless. Now so unhappy are these metrical defects—of so much importance do we take them to be, that we do not hesitate in declaring the general inferiority of the poem to its prototype to be altogether chargeable to them. With equal rhythm *Lady Geraldine* had been far, very far the superior poem. Inefficient rhythm is inefficient poetical expression; and expression, in poetry,—what is it? what is it not? No one living can better answer these queries than Miss Barrett.

We conclude our comments upon her versification, by quoting (we will not say whence, from what one of her poems) a few verses without the linear division

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as it appears in the book. There are many readers who would never suspect the passage to be intended for metre at all. "Ay! and sometimes, on the hillside, while we sat down on the gowans, with the forest green behind us, and its shadow cast before, and the river running under, and, across it from the rowans a partridge whirring near us till we felt the air it bore—there, obedient to her praying, did I read aloud the poems made by Tuscan flutes, or instruments more various of our own, read the pastoral parts of Spenser, or the subtle interflowings found in Petrarch's sonnets; here 's the book! the leaf is folded down!"

With this extract we make an end of our fault-finding, and now shall we speak, equally in detail, of the beauties of this book? Alas! here, indeed, do we feel the impotence of the pen. We have already said that the supreme excellence of the poetess whose works we review is made up of the multitudinous sums of a world of lofty merits. It is the multiplicity, it is the aggregation, which excites our most profound enthusiasm, and enforces our most earnest respect. But unless we had space to extract three fourths of the volumes, how could we convey this aggregation by specimens? We might quote, to be sure, an example of keen insight into our psychal natures, such as this:

I fell flooded with a Dark,
In the silence of a swoon;
When I rose, still cold and stark,

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There was night,—I saw the moon;
And the stars, each in its place,
And the May-blooms on the grass,
Seemed to wonder what I was.

And I walked as if apart
From myself, when I could stand,
And I pitied my own heart,
As if I held it in my hand
Somewhat coldly,—with a sense
Of fulfilled benevolence.

Or we might copy an instance of the purest and
most radiant imagination, such as this:

So, young muser, I sat listening,
To my Fancy's wildest word,
On a sudden, through the glistening
Leaves around, a little stirred,
Came a sound, a sense of music, which was rather felt
than heard.

Softly, finely, it inwound me,
From the world it shut me in,
Like a fountain falling round me
Which with silver waters thin,
Holds a little marble Naiad sitting smilingly within.

Or, again, we might extract a specimen of wild Dan-
tesque vigor, such as this, in combination with a
pathos never excelled:

Ay! be silent—let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth;
Let them touch each other's hands in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!

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Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals;
Let them prove their inward souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!

Or, still again, we might give a passage embodying
the most elevated sentiment, most tersely and musically
thus expressed :

And since, Prince Albert, men have called thy spirit high and
rare,
And truth to truth, and brave for truth, as some at Augsburg
were,
We charge thee by thy lofty thoughts, and by thy poet-mind,
Which not by glory or degree takes measure of mankind,
Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than for ring,
And hold her uncrowned womanhood to be the royal thing!

These passages, we say, and a hundred similar ones,
exemplifying particular excellences, might be displayed,
and we should still fail, as lamentably as the *skolas-
tikos* with his brick, in conveying an idea of the vast
totality. By no individual stars can we present the
constellatory radiance of the book. To the book then,
with implicit confidence, we appeal.

That Miss Barrett has done more in poetry than any
woman, living or dead, will scarcely be questioned;
that she has surpassed all her poetical contemporaries
of either sex, with a single exception, is our deliberate
opinion, not idly entertained, we think, nor founded
on any visionary basis. It may not be uninteresting,
therefore, in closing this examination of her claims,

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to determine in what manner she holds poetical relation with these contemporaries, or with her immediate predecessors, and especially with the great exception to which we have alluded, if at all.

If ever mortal "wreaked his thoughts upon expression," it was Shelley. If ever poet sang (as a bird sings) impulsively, earnestly, with utter abandonment to himself solely, and for the mere joy of his own song, that poet was the author of *The Sensitive Plant*. Of art, beyond that which is the inalienable instinct of genius, he either had little or disdained all. He really disdained that rule which is the emanation from law, because his own soul was law in itself. His rhapsodies are but the rough notes, the stenographic memoranda of poems,—memoranda which, because they were all-sufficient for his own intelligence, he cared not to be at the trouble of transcribing in full for mankind. In his whole life he wrought not thoroughly out a single conception. For this reason it is that he is the most fatiguing of poets. Yet he wearies in having done too little rather than too much; what seems in him the diffuseness of one idea is the conglomerate concision of many; and this concision it is which renders him obscure. With such a man, to imitate was out of the question; it would have answered no purpose, for he spoke to his own spirit alone, which would have comprehended no alien tongue; he was, therefore, profoundly original. His

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quaintness arose from intuitive perception of that truth to which Lord Verulam alone has given distinct voice: "There is no exquisite beauty which has not some strangeness in its proportion." But whether obscure, original, or quaint, he was at all times sincere. He had no affectations.

From the ruins of Shelley there sprang into existence, affronting the heavens, a tottering and fantastic pagoda in which the salient angles, tipped with mad, jangling bells, were the idiosyncratic faults of the great original—faults which cannot be called such in view of his purposes, but which are monstrous when we regard his works as addressed to mankind. A "school" arose, if that absurd term must still be employed,—a school, a system of rules, upon the basis of the Shelley who had none. Young men innumerable, dazzled with the glare and bewildered with the *bizarrerie* of the divine lightning that flickered through the clouds of the *Prometheus*, had no trouble whatever in heaping up imitative vapors, but, for the lightning, were content, perforce, with its spectrum, in which the *bizarrerie* appeared without the fire. Nor were great and mature minds unimpressed by the contemplation of a greater and more mature; and thus gradually were interwoven into this school of all lawlessness, of obscurity, quaintness, exaggeration, the misplaced didacticism of Wordsworth, and the even more preposterously anomalous metaphysicianism of Coleridge.

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Matters were now fast verging to their worst, and at length, in Tennyson, poetic inconsistency attained its extreme. But it was precisely this extreme, for the greatest error and the greatest truth are scarcely two points in a circle,—it was this extreme which, following the law of all extremes, wrought in him (in Tennyson) a natural and inevitable revulsion, leading him first to contemn and secondly to investigate his early manner, and finally to winnow from its magnificent elements the truest and purest of all poetical styles. But not even yet is the process complete; and for this reason in part, but chiefly on account of the mere fortuitousness of that mental and moral combination which shall unite in one person (if ever it shall) the Shelleyan abandon, the Tennysonian poetic sense, the most profound instinct of art, and the sternest will properly to blend and vigorously to control all,—chiefly, we say, because such combination of antagonisms must be purely fortuitous has the world never yet seen the noblest of the poems of which it is possible that it may be put in possession.

And yet Miss Barrett has narrowly missed the fulfilment of these conditions. Her poetic inspiration is the highest; we can conceive nothing more august. Her sense of art is pure in itself, but has been contaminated by pedantic study of false models, a study which has the more easily led her astray because she placed an undue value upon it as rare, as alien to her character



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of woman. The accident of having been long secluded by ill-health from the world has effected, moreover, in her behalf, what an innate recklessness did for Shelley,—has imparted to her, if not precisely that abandon to which I have referred, at least a something that stands well in its stead, a comparative independence of men and opinions with which she did not come personally in contact, a happy audacity of thought and expression never before known in one of her sex. It is, however, this same accident of ill-health, perhaps, which has invalidated her original will, diverted her from proper individuality of purpose, and seduced her into the sin of imitation. Thus, what she might have done we cannot altogether determine. What she has actually accomplished is before us. With Tennyson's works beside her, and a keen appreciation of them in her soul, appreciation too keen to be discriminative; with an imagination even more vigorous than his, although somewhat less ethereally delicate; with inferior art and more feeble volition, she has written poems such as he could not write, but such as he, under her conditions of ill-health and seclusion, would have written during the epoch of his pupildom in that school which arose out of Shelley, and from which, over a disgustful gulf of utter incongruity and absurdity, lit only by miasmatic flashes, into the broad, open meadows of natural art and divine genius, he, Tennyson, is at once the bridge and the transition.

not not but!
and delight we find





William W. Lord¹



Mr. Lord we know nothing, although we believe that he is a student at Princeton College, or perhaps a graduate, or perhaps a professor of that institution. Of his book, lately, we have heard a good deal; that is to say, we have heard it announced in every possible variation of phrase as "forthcoming." For several months past, indeed, much amusement has been occasioned in the various literary coteries in New York by the pertinacity and obviousness of an attempt made by the poet's friends to get up an anticipatory excitement in his favor. There were multitudinous dark rumors of something *in posse*, whispered insinuations that the sun had at length arisen or would certainly arise, that a book was really in press which would revolutionize the poetical world, that the MS. had been submitted to the inspection of a junto of critics whose fiat was well understood to be fate (Mr. Charles King, if we remember

¹ *Poems.* By William W. Lord. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

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aright, forming one of the junto), that the work had by them been approved, and its successful reception and illimitable glorification assured, Mr. Longfellow, in consequence, countermanding an order given his publishers (Redding & Co.) to issue forthwith a new threepenny edition of *The Voices of the Night*. Suggestions of this nature, busily circulated in private, were, in good time, insinuated through the press, until at length the public expectation was as much on tiptoe as public expectation in America can ever be expected to be about so small a matter as the issue of a volume of American poems. The climax of this whole effort, however, at forestalling the critical opinion, and by far the most injudicious portion of the procedure, was the publisher's announcement of the forthcoming book as "a very remarkable volume of poems."

The fact is, the only remarkable things about Mr. Lord's compositions are their remarkable conceit, ignorance, impudence, platitude, stupidity, and bombast: we are sorry to say all this, but there is an old adage about the falling of the heavens. Nor must we be misunderstood. We intend to wrong neither Mr. Lord nor our own conscience by denying him particular merits, such as they are. His book is not altogether contemptible, although the conduct of his friends has inoculated nine tenths of the community with the opinion that it is; but what we wish to say is, that "remarkable" is by no means the epithet to be ap-

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plied, in the way of commendation, either to anything that he has yet done, or to anything that he may hereafter accomplish. In a word, while he has undoubtedly given proof of a very ordinary species of talent, no man whose opinion is entitled to the slightest respect will admit in him any indication of genius.

The "particular merits" to which, in the case of Mr. Lord, we have allusion, are merely the accidental merits of particular passages. We say "accidental," because poetical merit which is not simply an accident is very sure to be found, more or less, in a state of diffusion throughout a poem. No man is entitled to the sacred name of poet because from 160 pages of doggerel may be culled a few sentences of worth. Nor would the case be in any respect altered if these few sentences, or even if a few passages of length, were of an excellence even supreme. For a poet is necessarily a man of genius, and with the spirit of true genius even its veriest commonplaces are intertwined and inextricably intertangled. When, therefore, amid a Sahara of platitude we discover an occasional oasis, we must not so far forget ourselves as to fancy any latent fertility in the sands. It is our purpose, however, to do the fullest justice to Mr. Lord, and we proceed at once to cull from his book whatever, in our opinion, will put in the fairest light his poetical pretensions.

And first we extract the one brief passage which aroused in us what we recognized as the poetical

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sentiment. It occurs at page 94 in *Saint Mary's Gift*, which, although excessively unoriginal at all points, is, upon the whole, the least reprehensible poem of the volume. The heroine of the story, having taken a sleeping draught, after the manner of Juliet, is conveyed to a vault (still in the same manner), and (still in the same manner) awakes in the presence of her lover, who comes to gaze on what he supposes her corpse:

And each unto the other was a dream;
And so they gazed without a stir or breath,
Until her head into the golden stream
Of her wide tresses, loosened from their wreath,
Sank back, as she did yield again to death.

At page 3, in a composition of much general eloquence, there occur a few lines of which we should not hesitate to speak enthusiastically were we not perfectly aware that Mr. Lord has no claim to their origination:

Ye winds
That in the impalpable deep caves of air,
Moving your silent plumes, in dreams of flight,
Tumultuous lie, and from your half-stretched wings
Beat the faint zephyrs that disturb the air!

At page 6, in the same poem, we meet also a passage of high merit, although sadly disfigured:

Thee the bright host of Heaven,
The stars adore:—a thousand altars, fed

William W. Lord

By pure unwearied hands, like cressets blaze
In the blue depths of night; nor all unseen
In the pale sky of day, with tempered light
Burn radiant of thy praise.

The disfiguration to which we allude lies in the making a blazing altar burn merely like a blazing cresset, a simile about as forcible as would be the likening an apple to a pear, or the sea-foam to the froth on a pitcher of Burton's ale.

At page 7, still in the same poem, we find some verses which are very quotable, and will serve to make our readers understand what we mean by the eloquence of the piece:

Great Worshipper! hast thou no thought of Him
Who gave the sun his brightness, winged the winds,
And on the everlasting deep bestowed
Its voiceless thunder—spread its fields of blue,
And made them glorious *like an inner sky*
From which the islands rise like steadfast clouds,
How beautiful! who gemmed thy zone with stars,
Around thee threw His own cerulean robe,
And bent His coronal about thy brows,
Shaped of the seven splendors of the light,
Piled up the mountains for thy throne; and thee
The image of His beauty made and power,
And gave thee to be sharer of His state,
His majesty, His glory, and His fear!

We extract this not because we like it ourselves, but because we take it for granted that there are many who will, and that Mr. Lord himself would desire us to

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extract it as a specimen of his power. The "Great Worshipper" is Nature. We disapprove, however, the man-milliner method in which she is tricked out, item by item. The "How beautiful!" should be understood, we fancy, as an expression of admiration on the part of Mr. Lord for the fine idea which immediately precedes, the idea which we have italicized. It is, in fact, by no means destitute of force, but we have met it before.

At page 70 there are two stanzas addressed *To My Sister*. The first of these we cite as the best thing of equal length to be found in the book. Its conclusion is particularly noble:

And shall we meet in heaven, and know and love ?
Do human feelings in that world above
Unchanged survive ? blest thought ! but ah, I fear
That thou, dear sister, in some other sphere,
Distant from mine will (wilt) find a brighter home,
Where I, unworthy found, may never come :—
Or be so high above the glorified,
That I, a meaner angel, undescried,
Seeking thine eyes, such love alone shall see
As angels give to all bestowed on me ;
And when my voice upon thy ear shall fall,
Hear only such reply as angels give to all.

We give these lines as they are: their grammatical construction is faulty; and the punctuation of the ninth line renders the sense equivocal.

William W. Lord

Of that species of composition which comes most appropriately under the head "Drivel," we should have no trouble in selecting as many specimens as our readers could desire. We will afflict them with one or two:

SONG

O soft is the ringdove's eye of love
When her mate returns from a weary flight,
And brightest of all the stars above
Is the one bright star that leads the night.

But softer thine eye than the dove's by far,
When of friendship and pity thou speakest to me;
And brighter, O brighter, than eve's one star,
When of love, sweet maid, I speak to thee.

Here is another

SONG

Oh, a heart it loves, it loves thee,
That never loved before;
Oh, a heart it loves, it loves thee,
That heart can love no more.

As the rose was in the bud, love,
Ere it opened into sight,
As yon star in drumlie daylight
Behind the blue was bright;

So thine image in my heart, love,
As pure, as bright, as fair,
Thyself unseen, unheeded,
I saw and loved it there.

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Oh, a heart it loves, it loves thee
As a heart ne'er loved before ;
Oh, a heart, it loves, loves, loves thee,
That heart can love no more.

In the *Widow's Complaint* we are entertained after
this fashion :

And what are these children
I once thought my own,
What now do they seem
But his orphans alone ?

In *The New Castalia* we have it thus :

Then a pallid beauteous maiden
Golden ghastly robes arrayed in,
Such a wondrous strain displayed in
In a wondrous song of Aidenne,
That all the gods and goddesses
Shook their golden yellow tresses,
Parnassus' self made half afraid in.

Just above this there is something about aged bel-
dames dreaming

of white throats sweetly jagged
With a ragged butch-knife dull,
And of night-mares neighing, weighing,
On a sleeper's bosom squatting.

But in mercy to our readers we forbear.

Mr. Lord is never elevated above the dead level of
his habitual platitude, by even the happiest thesis in
the world. That any man could, at one and the same

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time, fancy himself a poet and string together as many pitiable inanities as we see here, on so truly suggestive a thesis as that of *A Lady taking the Veil*, is to our apprehension a miracle of miracles. The idea would seem to be, of itself, sufficient to elicit fire from ice, to breathe animation into the most stolid of stone. Mr. Lord winds up a dissertation on the subject by the patronizing advice,

Ere thou, irrevocable, to that dark creed
Art yielded, think, O Lady, think again—

the whole of which would read better if it were

Ere thou, irrevocable, to this d—d doggerel
Art yielded, Lord, think! think! ah, think again!

Even with the great theme, Niagara, our poet fails in his obvious effort to work himself into a fit of inspiration. One of his poems has for title *A Hymn to Niagara*, but from beginning to end it is nothing more than a very silly "Hymn to Mr. Lord." Instead of describing the fall (as well as any Mr. Lord could be supposed to describe it) he rants about what *I* feel here, and about what *I* did not feel there; till at last the figure of little Mr. Lord, in the shape of a great capital, gets so thoroughly in between the reader and the waterfall that not a particle of the latter is to be discovered. At one point the poet directs his soul to issue a proclamation as follows:

William W. Lord

Proclaim, my soul, proclaim it to the sky!
And tell the stars, and tell the hills whose feet
Are in the depths of earth, their peaks in heaven,
And tell the Ocean's old familiar face
Beheld by day and night, in calm and storm,
That they, nor aught beside in earth or heaven,
Like thee, tremendous torrent, have so filled
Its thought of beauty, and so awed with might!

The "Its" has reference to the soul of Mr. Lord, who thinks it necessary to issue a proclamation to the stars and the hills and the ocean's old familiar face, lest the stars and the hills and the ocean's old familiar face should chance to be unaware of the fact that it (the soul of Mr. Lord) admitted the waterfall to be a fine thing; but whether the cataract for the compliment, or the stars for the information, are to be considered the party chiefly obliged—that, for the life of us, we cannot tell.

From the "first impression" of the cataract, he says:

At length my soul awaked—waked not again
To be o'erpressed, o'ermastered, and engulphed,
But of itself possessed, o'er all without
Felt conscious mastery!

And then
Retired within, and self-withdrawn, I stood
The twofold centre and informing soul
Of one vast harmony of sights and sounds,
And from that deep abyss, that rock-built shrine,

William W. Lord

Though mute my own frail voice, I poured a hymn
Of "praise and gratulation" like the noise
Of banded angels when they shout to wake
Empyrean echoes!

That so vast a personage as Mr. Lord should not be o'ermastered by the cataract, but feel "conscious mastery over all without"—and over all within, too—is certainly nothing more than reasonable and proper; but then he should have left the detail of these little facts to the cataract or to some other uninterested individual; even Cicero has been held to blame for a want of modesty, and although, to be sure, Cicero was not Mr. Lord, still Mr. Lord may be in danger of blame. He may have enemies (*very little men!*) who will pretend to deny that the "hymn of praise and gratulation" (if this is the hymn) bears at all points more than a partial resemblance to the "noise of banded angels when they shout to wake empyreal echoes." Not that we intend to deny it, but *they* will:—they are *very little people* and they *will*.

We have said that the "remarkable" feature, or at least one of the "remarkable" features of this volume is its platitude, its flatness. Whenever the reader meets anything not decidedly flat, he may take it for granted at once that it is stolen. When the poet speaks, for example, at page 148, of

Flowers, of young poets the first words,

William W. Lord

who can fall to remember the line in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* :

Fairies use flowers for their charactery ?

At page 10 he says :

Great oaks their heavenward lifted arms stretch forth
In suppliance !

The same thought will be found in *Pelham*, where the author is describing the dead tree beneath which is committed the murder. The grossest plagiarisms, indeed, abound. We would have no trouble, even, in pointing out a score from our most unimportant self. At page 27 Mr. Lord says :

They, albeit with inward pain,
Who thought to sing thy dirge, must sing thy pœan !

In a poem called *Lenore* we have it :

Avaunt ! to-night my heart is light ; no dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a pœan of old days !

At page 13 Mr. Lord says of certain flowers that

Ere beheld on Earth they gardened Heaven !

We print it as printed, note of admiration and all. In a poem called *Al Aaraaf* we have it thus :

A gemmy flower,
Inmate of highest stars, where erst it shamed
All other loveliness ;—'t was dropped from heaven
And fell on gardens of the unforgiven
In Trebizond.

William W. Lord

At page 57 Mr. Lord says:

On the old and haunted mountain,
There in dreams I dared to climb,
Where the clear Castalian fountain
(Silver fountain) ever tinkling
All the green around it sprinkling
Makes perpetual rhyme—
To my dream enchanted, golden,
Came a vision of the olden
Long-forgotten time.

**There are no doubt many of our friends who will
remember the commencement of our *Haunted Palace* :**

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.
Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This, all this, was in the olden
Time, long ago).

At page 60 Mr. Lord says:

And the aged beldames napping,
Dreamed of gently rapping, rapping,
With a hammer gently tapping,
Tapping on an infant's skull.

William W. Lord

In *The Raven* we have it:

While I nodded nearly napping,
Suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping,
Rapping at my chamber door.

But it is folly to pursue these thefts. As to any property of our own, Mr. Lord is very cordially welcome to whatever use he can make of it. But others may not be so pacifically disposed, and the book before us might be very materially thinned and reduced in cost by discarding from it all that belongs to Miss Barrett, Tennyson, Keats, Shelley, Proctor, Longfellow, and Lowell, the very class of poets, by the way, whom Mr. William W. Lord, in his *New Castalia*, the most especially affects to satirize and to contemn.

It has been rumored, we say, or, rather, it has been announced that Mr. Lord is a graduate or, perhaps, a professor of Princeton College, but we have had much difficulty in believing anything of the kind. The pages before us are not only utterly devoid of that classicism of tone and manner, that better species of classicism which a liberal education never fails to impart, but they abound in the most outrageously vulgar violations of grammar, of prosody in its most extended sense.

Of versification, and all that appertains to it, Mr. Lord is ignorant in the extreme. We doubt if he can tell the difference between a dactyl and an anapæst.

William W. Lord

In the heroic (iambic) pentameter he is continually introducing such verses as these :

A faint symphony to heaven ascending.
No heart of love, O God, Infinite One.
Of a thought as weak as aspiration.
Who were the original priests of this.
Of grace, magnificence, and power.
O'erwhelm me; this darkness that shuts out the sky.

Alexandrines, in the same metre, are encountered at every step; but it is very clear from the points at which they are met, and at which the cæsura is placed, that Mr. Lord has no idea of employing them as Alexandrines: they are merely excessive, that is to say, defective, pentameters. In a word, judging by his rhythm, we might suppose that the poet could neither see, hear, nor make use of his fingers. We do not know, in America, a versifier so utterly wretched and contemptible.

His most extraordinary sins, however, are in point of English. Here is his dedication, embodied in the very first page of the book :

" To Professor Albert B. Dod, These Poems, the offspring of an Earnest (if ineffectual) Desire toward the True and Beautiful, which were hardly my own by Paternity, when they became his by Adoption, are inscribed, with all Reverence and Affection by the Author."

William W. Lord

What is anybody to make of all this? What is the meaning of a "desire toward?"—and is it the "True and Beautiful" or the "Poems" which were hardly Mr. Lord's "own by paternity before they became his (Mr. Dod's) by adoption."

At page 12 we read:

Think, heedless one, or who with wanton step
Tramples the flowers.

At page 75, within the compass of eleven lines, we have three of the grossest blunders:

O Thou for whom as in thyself Thou art,
And by thyself perceived, we know no name,
Nor dare not seek to express—but unto us,
Adonal! who before the heavens were built
Or Earth's foundation laid, within thyself,
Thine own most glorious habitation *dwell*,
But when within the abyss,
With sudden light illuminated,
Thou, thine image to behold,
Into its quickened depths
Looked down with brooding eye!

At page 79 we read:

But ah! my heart, unduteous to my will,
Breathes only sadness: like an instrument
From whose quick strings, when hands devoid of skill
Solicit joy, *they* murmur and lament.

At page 86 is something even grosser than this:

William W. Lord

And still and rapt as pictured saint might be,
Like saint-like seemed as *her* she did adore.

At page 129 there is a similar error:

With half-closed eyes and ruffled feathers known
As *them* that fly not with the changing year.

At page 128 we find:

And thou didst dwell therein so truly loved
As none have been nor shall be loved again,
And yet *perceived* not, etc.

At page 155 we have:

But yet it may not, cannot be
That thou at length *hath* sunk to rest.

Invariably Mr. Lord writes "didst" "did'st"; "couldst" "could'st," etc. The fact is, he is absurdly ignorant of the commonest principles of grammar, and the only excuse we can make to our readers for annoying them with specifications in this respect is that, without the specifications, we should never have been believed.

But enough of this folly. We are heartily tired of the book, and thoroughly disgusted with the impudence of the parties who have been aiding and abetting in thrusting it before the public. To the poet himself we have only to say, from any further specimens of your stupidity, good Lord deliver us!



Some Secrets of the Magazine Prison-House

THE want of an International Copyright Law, by rendering it nearly impossible to obtain anything from the booksellers in the way of remuneration for literary labor, has had the effect of forcing many of our best writers into the service of the magazines and reviews, which, with a pertinacity that does them credit, keep up in a certain or uncertain degree the good old saying, that even in the thankless field of letters the laborer is worthy of his hire. How—by dint of what dogged instinct of the honest and proper—these journals have contrived to persist in their paying practices, in the very teeth of the opposition got up by the Fosters and Leonard Scotts, who furnish for eight dollars any four of the British periodicals for a year, is a point we have had much difficulty in settling to our satisfaction, and we have been forced to settle it at last upon no more reasonable

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ground than that of a still lingering *esprit de patrie*, That magazines can live, and not only live but thrive, and not only thrive but afford to disburse money for original contributions, are facts which can only be solved, under the circumstances, by the really fanciful, but still agreeable, supposition that there is somewhere still existing an ember not altogether quenched among the fires of good feeling for letters and literary men that once animated the American bosom.

It would not do (perhaps this is the idea) to let our poor-devil authors absolutely starve while we grow fat, in a literary sense, on the good things of which we unblushingly pick the pocket of all Europe; it would not be exactly the thing *comme il faut* to permit a positive atrocity of this kind; and hence we have magazines, and hence we have a portion of the public who subscribe to these magazines (through sheer pity), and hence we have magazine publishers (who sometimes take upon themselves the duplicate title of "editor and proprietor")—publishers, we say, who, under certain conditions of good conduct, occasional puffs, and decent subserviency at all times, make it a point of conscience to encourage the poor-devil author with a dollar or two, more or less, as he behaves himself properly and abstains from the indecent habit of turning up his nose.

We hope, however, that we are not so prejudiced or so vindictive as to insinuate that what certainly does

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look like illiberality on the part of them (the magazine publishers) is really an illiberality chargeable to them. In fact, it will be seen at once that what we have said has a tendency directly the reverse of any such accusation. These publishers pay something; other publishers nothing at all. Here certainly is a difference, although a mathematician might contend that the difference might be infinitesimally small. Still, these magazine editors and proprietors pay (that is the word), and with your true poor-devil author the smallest favors are sure to be thankfully received. No: the illiberality lies at the door of the demagogue-ridden public, who suffer their anointed delegates (or, perhaps, aointed—which is it ?) to insult the common sense of them (the public) by making orations in our national halls on the beauty and conveniency of robbing the Literary Europe on the highway, and on the gross absurdity in especial of admitting so unprincipled a principle that a man has any right and title either to his own brains or to the flimsy material that he chooses to spin out of them, like a confounded caterpillar as he is. If anything of this gossamer character stands in need of protection, why, we have our hands full at once with the silk-worms and the *morus multicaulis*.

But if we cannot, under the circumstances, complain of the absolute illiberality of the magazine publishers (since pay they do), there is at least one particular in

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which we have against them good grounds of accusation. Why (since pay they must) do they not pay with a good grace and promptly? Were we in an ill-humor at this moment we could a tale unfold which would erect the hair on the head of Shylock. A young author, struggling with despair itself in the shape of a ghastly poverty which has no alleviation, no sympathy from an every-day world that cannot understand his necessities, and that would pretend not to understand them if it comprehended them ever so well,—this young author is politely requested to compose an article, for which he will “be handsomely paid.” Enraptured, he neglects, perhaps for a month, the sole employment which affords him the chance of a livelihood, and, having starved through the month (he and his family), completes at length the month of starvation and the article, and despatches the latter, with a broad hint about the former, to the pursy “editor” and bottle-nosed “proprietor” who has condescended to honor him (the poor devil) with his patronage. A month (starving still), and no reply. Another month,—still none. Two months more,—still none. A second letter, modestly hinting that the article may not have reached its destination; still no reply. At the expiration of six additional months, personal application is made at the “editor’s” and “proprietor’s” office. Call again. The poor devil goes out, and does not fail to call again. Still call again; and call again

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is the word for three or four months more. His patience exhausted, the article is demanded. No, he can't have it (the truth is, it was too good to be given up so easily), "it is in print," and "contributions of this character are never paid for (it is a rule we have) under six months after publication. Call in six months after the issue of your affair, and your money is ready for you—for we are business men ourselves, prompt." With this the poor devil is satisfied, and makes up his mind that the "editor and proprietor" is a gentleman, and that, of course, he (the poor devil) will wait as requested. And it is supposable that he would have waited if he could, but death in the meantime would not. He dies, and by the good luck of his decease (which came by starvation) the fat "editor and proprietor" is fat henceforward and forever to the amount of five-and-twenty dollars, very cleverly saved, to be spent generously in canvasbacks and champagne.

There are two things which we hope the reader will not do as he runs over this article: first, we hope that he will not believe that we write from any personal experience of our own, for we have only the reports of actual sufferers to depend upon; and, second, that he will not make any personal application of our remarks to any magazine publisher now living, it being well known that they are all as remarkable for their generosity and urbanity as for their intelligence and appreciation of genius.



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A DISCUSSION WITH "OUTIS"



FOR the *Evening Mirror* of January 14, (1846), before my editorial connection with the *Broadway Journal*, I furnished a brief criticism on Professor Longfellow's *Waif*. In the course of my observations, I collated a poem called *The Death-Bed*, and written by Hood, with one by Mr. Aldrich, entitled *A Death-Bed*. The criticism ended thus:

"We conclude our notes on the *Waif* with the observation that, although full of beauties, it is infected with a moral taint—or is this a mere freak of our own fancy? We shall be pleased if it be so; but there does appear, in this little volume, a very careful avoidance of all American poets who may be supposed especially to interfere with the claims of Mr. Longfellow. These men Mr. Longfellow can continuously imitate

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(is that the word ?) and yet never even incidentally commend."

Much discussion ensued. A friend of Mr. Longfellow's penned a defence, which had at least the merit of being thoroughly impartial; for it defended Mr. L. not only from the one tenth of very moderate disapproval in which I had indulged, but from the nine tenths of my enthusiastic admiration into the bargain. The fact is, if I was not convinced that in ninety-nine hundredths of all that I had written about Mr. Longfellow I was decidedly in the wrong, at least it was no fault of Mr. Longfellow's very luminous friend. This well-intended defence was published in the *Mirror*, with a few words of preface by Mr. Willis, and of postscript by myself. Still dissatisfied, Mr. L., through a second friend, addressed to Mr. Willis an expostulatory letter, of which the *Mirror* printed only the following portion :

"It has been asked, perhaps, why Lowell was neglected in this collection ? Might it not as well be asked why Bryant, Dana, and Halleck were neglected ? The answer is obvious to any one who candidly considers the character of the collection. It professed to be, according to the "Proem," from the humbler poets ; and it was intended to embrace pieces that were anonymous, or which were easily accessible to the general reader—the waifs and estrays of literature. To put

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anything of Lowell's, for example, into a collection of waifs would be a particular liberty with pieces which are all collected and christened."

Not yet content, or misunderstanding the tenor of some of the wittily-put comments which accompanied the quotation, the aggrieved poet, through one of the two friends as before, or perhaps through a third, finally prevailed on the good nature of Mr. Willis to publish an explicit declaration of his disagreement with "*all* the disparagement of Longfellow" which had appeared in the criticism in question.

Now, when we consider that many of the points of censure made by me in this critique were absolutely as plain as the nose upon Mr. Longfellow's face, that it was impossible to gainsay them, that we defied him and his coadjutors to say a syllable in reply to them, and that they held their tongues and not a syllable said,—when we consider all this, I say, then the satire of the "*all*" in Mr. Willis's manifesto becomes apparent at once. Mr. Longfellow did not see it; and I presume his friends did not see it. I did. In my mind's eye it expanded itself thus: "My dear sir, or sirs, what will you have? You are an insatiable set of cormorants, it is true; but if you will only let me know what you desire, I will satisfy you, if I die for it. Be quick!—merely say what it is you wish me to admit, and (for the sake of getting rid of you) I will

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admit it upon the spot. Come! I will grant at once that Mr. Longfellow is Jupiter Tonans, and that his three friends are the Graces, or the Furies, whichever you please. As for a fault to be found with either of you, that is impossible, and I say so. I disagree with all—with every syllable—of the disparagement that ever has been whispered against you up to this date, and (not to stand upon trifles) with all that ever shall be whispered against you henceforward, forever and forever. May I hope at length that these assurances will be sufficient?" But if Mr. Willis really hoped anything of the kind he was mistaken.

In the meantime Mr. Briggs, in the *Broadway Journal*, did me the honor of taking me to task for what he supposed to be my insinuations against Mr. Aldrich. My reply (in the *Mirror*), prefaced by a few words from Mr. Willis, ran as follows:

"Much interest has been given in our literary circles of late to the topic of plagiarism. About a month ago a very eminent critic connected with this paper took occasion to point out a parallelism between certain lines of Thomas Hood and certain others which appeared in the collection of American poetry edited by Mr. Griswold. Transcribing the passages, he ventured the assertion that "somebody is a thief." The matter had been nearly forgotten, if not altogether so, when a 'good-natured friend' of the American author

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(whose name had by us never been mentioned) considered it advisable to re-collate the passages, with the view of convincing the public (and himself) that no plagiarism is chargeable to the party of whom he thinks it chivalrous to be the 'good-natured friend.' For our own part, should we ever be guilty of an indiscretion of this kind, we deprecate all aid from our 'good-natured friends'; but in the meantime it is rendered necessary that once again we give publicity to the collation of poems in question. Mr. Hood's lines run thus:

We watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seemed to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her being out.

Our very hopes belied our fears;
Our fears our hopes belied;
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

But when the morn came dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed;—she had
Another morn than ours.

Mr. Aldrich's thus:

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Her sufferings ended with the day,
Yet lived she at its close,
And breathed the long, long night away
In statue-like repose;

But when the sun in all its state
Illumed the eastern skies,
She passed through Glory's morning gate,
And walked in paradise.

“And here, to be sure, we might well leave a decision in the case to the verdict of common sense. But since the *Broadway Journal* insists upon the ‘no resemblance,’ we are constrained to point out especially where our supposed similarity lies. In the first place, then, the subject in both pieces is death. In the second, it is the death of a woman. In the third, it is the death of a woman tranquilly dying. In the fourth, it is the death of a woman who lies tranquilly throughout the night. In the fifth, it is the death of a woman whose ‘breathing soft and low is watched through the night,’ in one instance, and who ‘breathed the long, long night away in statue-like repose’ in the other. In the sixth place, in both poems this woman dies just at daybreak. In the seventh place, dying just at daybreak, this woman, in both cases, steps directly into paradise. In the eighth place, all these identities of circumstance are related in identical rhythms. In the ninth place, these identical rhythms are arranged in identical metres; and, in the tenth place, these identical

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rhythms and metres are constructed into identical stanzas."

At this point the matter rested for a fortnight, when a fourth friend of Mr. Longfellow took up the cudgels for him and Mr. Aldrich conjointly, in another communication to the *Mirror*. I copy it in full:

"PLAGIARISM.—*Dear Willis*,—Fair play is a jewel, and I hope you will let us have it. I have been much amused by some of the efforts of your critical friend to convict Longfellow of imitation, and Aldrich and others of plagiarism. What is plagiarism? And what constitutes a good ground for the charge? Did no two men ever think alike without stealing one from the other? or, thinking alike, did no two men ever use the same, or similar words, to convey the thoughts, and that, without any communication with each other? To deny it would be absurd. It is a thing of every-day occurrence. Some years ago a letter was written from some part of New England, describing one of those scenes, not very common during what is called 'the January thaw,' when the snow, mingled with rain, and freezing as it falls, forms a perfect covering of ice upon every object. The storm clears away suddenly and the moon comes up. The letter proceeds: 'Every tree and shrub, as far as the eye can reach, of pure transparent glass—a perfect garden of moving, waving, breathing crystals. . . . Every tree is a

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diamond chandelier, with a whole constellation of stars clustering to every socket,' etc. This letter was laid away where such things usually are, in a private drawer, and did not see the light for many years. But the very next autumn brought out, among the splendid annuals got up in the country, a beautiful poem from Whittier, describing the same, or rather a similar scene, in which the line

The trees, like crystal chandeliers,

was put in italics by every reviewer in the land, for the exceeding beauty of the imagery. Now the letter was written, probably, about the same time with the poem, though the poem was not published till nearly a year after. The writers were not, and never have been, acquainted with each other, and neither could possibly have seen the work of the other before writing. Now, was there any plagiarism here? Yet there are plenty of 'identities.' The author of the letter, when urged, some years after, to have it published, consented very reluctantly, through fear that he should be charged with theft; and, very probably, the charge has been made, though I have never seen it. May not this often occur? What is more natural? Images are not created, but suggested. And why not the same images, when the circumstances are precisely the same to different minds? Perhaps your critic will reply, that the case is different after one of the com-

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positions is published. How so? Does he or you or anybody read everything that is published? I am a great admirer, and a general reader of poetry. But, by what accident I do not know, I had never seen the beautiful lines of Hood till your critical friend brought them to my notice in the *Mirror*. It is certainly possible that Aldrich had not seen them several years ago, and more than probable that Hood had not seen Aldrich's. Yet your friend affects great sympathy for both, in view of their bitter compunctions of conscience, for their literary piracies.

"But, after all, wherein does the real resemblance between these two compositions consist? Mr. — (I had almost named him) finds nearly a dozen points of resemblance. But when he includes rhythm, metre, and stanza among the dozen, he only shows a bitter resolution to make out a case and not a disposition to do impartial justice. Surely the critic himself, who is one of our finest poets, does not mean to deny that these mere externals are the common property of all bards. He does not feel it necessary to strike out a new stanza, or to invent new feet and measures, whenever he would clothe his 'breathing thoughts in words that burn.' Again, it is not improbable that, within the period of time since these two writers, Hood and Aldrich, came on the stage, ten thousand females have died, and died tranquilly, and died just at daybreak, and that after passing a tranquil night, and, so dying,

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were supposed by their friends to have passed at once to a better world, a morning in heaven. The poets are both describing an actual, and not an imaginary, occurrence. And here, including those before mentioned, which are common property, are nine of the critic's identities, which go to make up the evidence of plagiarism. The last six, it requires no stretch of imagination to suppose, they might each have seen and noticed separately. The most of them, one other poet at least, has noticed, many years ago, in a beautiful poem on these words of the angel to the wrestling Jacob, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh.' Wonder if Hood ever saw that? The few remaining 'identities' are, to my mind, sufficiently disposed of by what I have already said. I confess I was not able, until the appearance of the critic's second paper, in which he brought them out specially, 'marked, numbered, and labelled,' to perceive the resemblance on which the grave charge of literary piracy and moral dishonesty of the meanest kind was based. In view of all the glaring improbabilities of such a case, a critic should be very slow to make such a charge. I say glaring improbabilities, for it seems to me that no circumstantial evidence could be sufficient to secure a verdict of theft in such a case. Look at it. A man who aspires to fame, who seeks the esteem and praise of the world and lives upon his reputation as his vital element, attempts to win his object—how? By steal-

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ing, in open day, the finest passages, the most beautiful thoughts (no others are worth stealing), and the rarest images of another, and claiming them as his own; and that, too, when he knows that every competitor for fame, and every critical tribunal in the world, as well as the real owner, will be ready to identify the borrowed plumes in a moment, and cry him down as a thief. A madman, an idiot, if he were capable of such an achievement, might do it, but no other. A rogue may steal what he can conceal in his pocket or his chest; but one must be utterly *non compos*, to steal a splendid shawl or a magnificent plume, which had been admired by thousands for its singular beauty, for the purpose of sporting it in Broadway. In nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, such charges are absurd, and indicate rather the carping littleness of the critic than the delinquency of his victim.

“Pray, did you ever think the worse of Dana because your friend, John Neal, charged him with pirating upon Paul Allen, and Bryant, too, in his poem of ‘THE DYING RAVEN?’ or of yourself, because the same friend thought he had detected you in the very act of stealing from Pinckney and Miss Francis, now Mrs. Child? Surely not. Everybody knows that John Neal wishes to be supposed to have read everything that ever was written, and never had forgotten anything. He delights, therefore, in showing up such resemblances.

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“And now—for the matter of Longfellow’s imitations. In what do they consist? The critic is not very specific in this charge. Of what kind are they? Are they imitations of thought? Why not call them plagiarisms then, and show them up? Or are they only verbal imitations of style? Perhaps this is one of them, in his poem on the *Sea Weed*,

drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main,

resembling, in form and collocation only, a line in a beautiful and very powerful poem of Mr. Edgar A. Poe. (Write it rather Edgar, a Poet, and then it is right to a T.) I have not the poem before me, and have forgotten its title. But he is describing a magnificent intellect in ruins, if I remember rightly, and, speaking of the eloquence of its better days, represents it as

flowing, flowing, flowing
Like a river.

Is this what the critic means? Is it such imitations as this that he alludes to? If not, I am at fault, either in my reading of Longfellow, or in my general familiarity with the American poets. If this be the kind of imitation referred to, permit me to say the charge is too paltry for any man, who valued his reputation either as a gentleman or a scholar, to make. Who,

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for example, would wish to be guilty of the littleness of detracting from the uncommon merit of that remarkable poem of this same Mr. Poe's, recently published in the *Mirror*, from the *American Review*, entitled *The Raven*, by charging him with the paltriness of imitation? And yet some snarling critic, who might envy the reputation he had not the genius to secure for himself, might refer to the frequent, very forcible, but rather quaint repetition, in the last two lines of many of the stanzas, as a palpable imitation of the manner of Coleridge, in several stanzas of *The Ancient Mariner*. Let me put them together. Mr. Poe says:

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore,
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore.

And again:

It shall clasp a sainted maiden, whom the angels name
Lenore—

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels name
Lenore.

Mr. Coleridge says (running two lines into one):

For all averred I had killed the bird, that made the breeze to
blow.

"Ah, wretch!" said they, "the bird to slay, that made the
breeze to blow."

And again:

They all averred I had killed the bird, that brought the fog and
mist.

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"'T was right," said they, "such birds to slay, that bring the fog and mist."

"I have before me an anonymous poem, which I first saw some five years ago, entitled *The Bird of the Dream*. I should like to transcribe the whole, but it is too long. The author was awakened from sleep by the song of a beautiful bird, sitting on the sill of his window; the sweet notes had mingled with his dreams, and brought to his remembrance the sweeter voice of his lost 'Clare.' He says:

And thou wert in my dream—a spirit thou didst seem—
The spirit of a friend long since departed;
Oh! she was fair and bright, but she left me one dark night—
She left me all alone, and broken-hearted. . . .

My dream went on, and thou went a-warbling too,
Mingling the harmonies of earth and heaven;
Till away—away—away—beyond the realms of day—
My angel Clare to my embrace was given. . . .

Sweet bird from realms of light, oh! come again to-night,
Come to my window—perch upon my chair—
Come give me back again that deep impassioned strain
That tells me thou hast seen and loved my Clare.

"Now, I shall not charge Mr. Poe with plagiarism, for, as I have said, such charges are perfectly absurd. Ten to one he never saw this before. But let us look at the 'identities' that may be made out between this and *The Raven*. First, in each case, the poet is a broken-hearted lover. Second, that lover longs for

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some hereafter communion with the departed. Third, there is a bird. Fourth, the bird is at the poet's window. Fifth, the bird, being at the poet's window, makes a noise. Sixth, making a noise, attracts the attention of the poet, who, seventh, was half asleep, dosing, dreaming. Eighth, the poet invites the bird to come in. Ninth, a confabulation ensues. Tenth, the bird is supposed to be a visitor from the land of spirits. Eleventh, allusion is made to the departed. Twelfth, intimation is given that the bird knew something of the departed. Thirteenth, that he knew her worth and loveliness. Fourteenth, the bird seems willing to linger with the poet. Fifteenth, there is a repetition, in the second and fourth lines, of a part, and that the emphatic part, of the first and third. Here is a round baker's-dozen (and two to spare) of identities, to offset the dozen found between Aldrich and Hood, and that, too, without a word of rhythm, metre, or stanza, which should never form a part of such a comparison. Moreover, this same poem contains an example of that kind of repetition, which I have supposed the critic meant to charge upon Longfellow as one of his imitations:

Away—away—away, etc.

“I might pursue it further. But I will not. Such criticisms only make the author of them contemptible, without soiling a plume in the cap of his victim. I

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have selected this poem of Mr. Poe's for illustrating my remarks because it is recent, and must be familiar to all the lovers of true poetry hereabouts. It is remarkable for its power, beauty, and originality (out upon the automaton owl that has presumed to croak out a miserable parody—I commend him to the tender mercies of Haynes Bayley ¹) and shows, more forcibly than any which I can think of, the absurdity and shallowness of this kind of criticism. One word more: though acquainted with Mr. Longfellow, I have never seen Mr. Aldrich, nor do I even know in what part of the country he resides; and I have no acquaintance with Mr. Poe. I have written what I have written with no personal motives, but simply because, from my earliest reading of reviews and critical notices, I have been disgusted with this wholesale mangling of victims without rhyme or reason. I scarcely remember an instance where the resemblances detected were not exceedingly far-fetched and shadowy, and only perceptible to a mind predisposed to suspicion and accustomed to splitting hairs. OUTIS."

What I admire in this letter is the gentlemanly grace of its manner and the chivalry which has prompted its composition. What I do not admire is all the rest. In especial, I do not admire the desperation of the effort to make out a case. No gentleman should de-

¹ I would be a Parody, written by a ninny,
Not worth a penny, and sold for a guinea, etc.

The Domain of Arithmetic
During the afternoon the passed between shores of a long
and narrow channel, and the water was very shallow.

The Domain of Arnheim.

"During the forenoon he passed ~~his~~ ^{his} ~~beaver~~ ^{beaver} ~~chaise~~ ^{chaise}, of a tran-

quil and domestic beauty." critical notices, I
 some mangling of
 I scarcely remem-
 ber detected were
 how, and only
 led to suspicion and
 OUTIS."

to gentlemanly grace
 of which has prompted it
 there is all the rest
 cooperation of t
 to a gentleman should

to a gentleman, etc.
 to a gentleman, etc.



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grade himself, on any grounds, to the paltriness of *ex parte* argument; and I shall not insult Outis at the outset by assuming for a moment that he (Outis) is weak enough to suppose me (Poe) silly enough to look upon all this abominable rigmarole as anything better than a very respectable specimen of special pleading.

As a general rule in a case of this kind, I should wish to begin with the beginning, but as I have been unable, in running my eye over Outis's remarks, to discover that they have any beginning at all, I shall be pardoned for touching them in the order which suits me best. Outis need not have put himself to the trouble of informing his readers that he has "some acquaintance with Mr. Longfellow." It was needless, also, to mention that he did not know me. I thank him for his many flatteries, but of their inconsistency I complain. To speak of me in one breath as a poet, and in the next to insinuate charges of "carping littleness" is simply to put forth a flat paradox. When a plagiarism is committed and detected, the word "littleness" and other similar words are immediately brought into play. To the words themselves I have no objection whatever; but their application might occasionally be improved.

Is it altogether impossible that a critic be instigated to the exposure of a plagiarism or, still better, of plagiarism generally wherever he meets it, by a strictly honorable and even charitable motive? Let us see.

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A theft of this kind is committed—for the present we will admit the possibility that a theft of this character can be committed. The chances, of course, are that an established author steals from an unknown one, rather than the converse, for in proportion to the circulation of the original is the risk of the plagiarism's detection. The person about to commit the theft hopes for impunity altogether on the ground of the reconditeness of the source from which he thieves. But this obvious consideration is rarely borne in mind. We read a certain passage in a certain book. We meet a passage nearly similar in another book. The first book is not at hand, and we cannot compare dates. We decide by what we fancy the probabilities of the case. The one author is a distinguished man—our sympathies are always in favor of distinction. "It is not likely," we say in our hearts, "that so distinguished a personage as A would be guilty of plagiarism from this B of whom nobody in the world has ever heard." We give judgment, therefore, at once against B, of whom nobody in the world has ever heard; and it is for the very reason that nobody in the world has ever heard of him that, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, the judgment so precipitously given is erroneous. Now, then, the plagiarist has not merely committed a wrong in itself, a wrong whose incomparable meanness would deserve exposure on absolute grounds, but he, the guilty, the successful, the

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eminent, has fastened the degradation of his crime, the retribution which should have overtaken it in his own person, upon the guiltless, the toiling, the unfriended struggler up the mountainous path of fame. Is not sympathy for the plagiarist, then, about as sagacious and about as generous as would be sympathy for the murderer whose exultant escape from the noose of the hangman should be the cause of an innocent man's being hung? And because I, for one, should wish to throttle the guilty with the view of letting the innocent go, could it be considered proper on the part of any "acquaintance of Mr. Longfellow's" who came to witness the execution,—could it be thought, I say, either chivalrous or decorous on the part of this "acquaintance" to get up against me a charge of "carping littleness," while we stood amicably together at the foot of the gallows?

In all this I have taken it for granted that such a sin as plagiarism exists. We are informed by Outis, however, that it does not. "I shall not charge Mr. Poe with plagiarism," he says, "for, as I have said, such charges are perfectly absurd." An assertion of this kind is certainly *funny* (I am aware of no other epithet which precisely applies to it); and I have much curiosity to know if Outis is prepared to swear to its truth, holding aloft his right hand, of course, and kissing the back of D'Israeli's *Curiosities*, or the *Mélanges* of Suard and André. But if the assertion is funny (and

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it is), it is by no means an original thing. It is precisely, in fact, what all the plagiarists and all the "acquaintances" of the plagiarists since the flood have maintained with a very praiseworthy resolution. The attempt to prove, however, by reasoning *a priori*, that plagiarism cannot exist is too good an idea on the part of Outis not to be a plagiarism in itself. Are we mistaken?—or have we seen the following words before in Joseph Miller, where that ingenious gentleman is bent upon demonstrating that a leg of mutton is, and ought to be, a turnip?

"A man who aspires to fame, etc., attempts to win his object—how? By stealing, in open day, the finest passages, the most beautiful thoughts (no others are worth stealing), and claiming them as his own; and that, too, when he knows that every competitor, etc., will be ready to cry him down as a thief."

Is it possible—is it conceivable that Outis does not here see the begging of the whole question? Why, of course, if the theft had to be committed "in open day" it would not be committed; and if the thief "knew" that every one would cry him down, he would be too excessive a fool to make even a decent thief if he indulged his thieving propensities in any respect. But he thieves at night, in the dark, and not in the open day (if he suspects it), and he does not know that he will be detected at all. Of the class of wilful plagia-

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rists nine out of ten are authors of established reputation, who plunder recondite, neglected, or forgotten books.

"I shall not accuse Mr. Poe of plagiarism," says Outis, "for, as I have observed before, such charges are perfectly absurd," and Outis is certainly right in dwelling on the point that he has observed this thing before. It is the one original point of his essay; for I really believe that no one else was ever silly enough to "observe it before."

Here is a gentleman who writes in certain respects as a gentleman should, and who yet has the effrontery to base a defence of a friend from the charge of plagiarism on the broad ground that no such thing as plagiarism ever existed. I confess that to an assertion of this nature there is no little difficulty in getting up a reply. What in the world can a man say in a case of this kind?—he cannot, of course, give utterance to the first epithets that spring to his lips; and yet what else shall he utter that shall not have an air of direct insult to the common sense of mankind? What could any judge on any bench in the country do but laugh or swear at the attorney who should begin his defence of a petty-larceny client with an oration demonstrating *a priori* that no such thing as petty larceny ever had been, or, in the nature of things, ever could be committed? And yet the attorney might make as sensible a speech as Outis, even a more sen-

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sible one,—anything but a less sensible one. Indeed, *mutato nomine*, he might employ Outis's identical words. He might say: "In view, gentlemen of the jury, of all the glaring improbabilities of such a case, a prosecuting attorney should be very slow to make such a charge. I say glaring improbabilities, for it seems to me that no circumstantial evidence could be sufficient to secure a verdict of theft in such a case. Look at it. [Here the judge would look at the maker of the speech.] Look at it. A man who aspires to (the) fame (of being a beau), who seeks the esteem and praise of all the world (of dandies), and lives upon his reputation (for broadcloth) as his vital element, attempts to win his object—how? By stealing in open day the finest waistcoats, the most beautiful dress-coats (no others are worth stealing) and the rarest pantaloons of another, and claiming them as his own; and that, too, when he knows that every competitor for (the) fame (of Brummelism) and every fashion-plate magazine in the world, as well as the real owner, will be ready to identify the borrowed plumes in a moment and cry him down as a thief. A madman, an idiot, if he were capable of such an achievement, might do it, gentlemen of the jury, but no other."

Now, of course, no judge in the world whose sense of duty was not overruled by a stronger sense of the facetious, would permit the attorney to proceed with any such speech. It would never do to have the time

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of the court occupied by this gentleman's well-meant endeavor to show *a priori* the impossibility of that ever happening which the clerk of this same court could show *a posteriori* had been happening by wholesale ever since there had been such a thing as a foreign count. And yet the speech of the attorney was really a very excellent speech, when we compare it with that of Outis. For the "glaring improbability" of the plagiarism is a mere nothing by the side of the "glaring improbability" of the theft of the sky-blue dress-coat and the yellow plaid pantaloons; we may take it for granted, of course, that the thief was one of the upper ten thousand of thieves, and would not have put himself to the trouble of appropriating any garments that were not of indisputable *bon ton*, and patronized even by Professor Longfellow himself. The improbability of the literary theft, I say, is really a mere trifle in comparison with the broadcloth larceny. For the plagiarist is either a man of no note or a man of note. In the first case, he is usually an ignoramus, and, getting possession of a rather rare book, plunders it without scruple, on the ground that nobody has ever seen a copy of it except himself. In the second case, which is a more general one by far, he pilfers from some poverty-stricken and therefore neglected man of genius, on the reasonable supposition that this neglected man of genius will very soon cut his throat or die of starvation (the sooner the better, no doubt),

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and that in the meantime he will be too busy in keeping the wolf from the door to look after the purloiners of his property, and too poor, and too cowed, and for these reasons too contemptible, under any circumstances, to dare accuse, of so base a thing as theft, the wealthy and triumphant gentleman of elegant leisure who has only done the vagabond too much honor in knocking him down and robbing him upon the highway.

The plagiarist, then, in either case, has very reasonable ground for expecting impunity, and at all events it is because he thinks so that he perpetrates the plagiarism; but how is it with the count who steps into the shop of a tailor and slips under his cloak the sky-blue dress-coat and the yellow plaid pantaloons? He, the count, would be a greater fool in these matters than a count ever was, if he did not perceive at once that the chances were about nine hundred and ninety-nine to one that he would be caught the next morning before twelve o'clock, in the very first bloom and blush of his promenade down Broadway, by some one of those officious individuals who are continually on the *qui vive* to catch the counts and take away from them their sky-blue coats and yellow plaid pantaloons. Yes, undoubtedly; the count is very well aware of all this; but he takes into consideration that, although the nine hundred and ninety-nine chances are certainly against him, the one is just as certainly

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in his favor, that luck is everything, that life is short, that the weather is fine, and that, if he can only manage to get safely through his promenade down Broadway in the sky-blue dress-coat and the yellow plaid pantaloons, he will enjoy the high honor, for once in his life at least, of being mistaken, by fifteen ladies out of twenty, either for Professor Longfellow or Phœbus Apollo. And this consideration is enough; the half of it would have been more than enough to satisfy the count that, in putting the garments under his cloak, he is doing a very sagacious and very commendable thing. He steals them, then, at once and without scruple, and, when he is caught arrayed in them the next morning, he is, of course, highly amused to hear his counsel make an oration in court about the "glaring improbability" of his having stolen them when he stole them, by way of showing the abstract impossibility of their ever having been stolen at all.

"What is plagiarism?" demands Outis at the outset, *avec l'air d'un Romain qui sauve sa patrie*—"What is plagiarism, and what constitutes a good ground for the charge?" Of course all men anticipate something unusually happy in the way of reply to queries so cavernously propounded; but if so, then all men have forgotten, or no man has ever known, that Outis is a Yankee. He answers the two questions by two others, and perhaps this is quite as much as any one should expect him to do. "Did no two men," he

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says, "ever think alike without stealing one from the other; or, thinking alike, did no two men ever use the same or similar words to convey the thoughts, and that without any communication with each other?—To deny it is absurd." Of course it is, very absurd; and the only thing more absurd that I can call to mind at present is the supposition that any person ever entertained an idea of denying it. But are we to understand the denying it, or the absurdity of denying it, or the absurdity of supposing that any person intended to deny it, as the true answer to the original queries?

But let me aid Outis to a distinct conception of his own irrelevance. I accuse his friend, specifically, of a plagiarism. This accusation Outis rebuts by asking me with a grave face, not whether the friend might not, in this individual case, and in the compass of eight short lines, have happened upon ten or twelve peculiar identities of thought and identities of expression with the author from whom I charge him with plagiarizing, but simply whether I do not admit the possibility that once in the course of eternity some two individuals might not happen upon a single identity of thought, and give it voice in a single identity of expression.

Now, frankly, I admit the possibility in question, and would request my friends to get ready for me a strait-jacket if I did not. There can be no doubt in the world, for example, that Outis considers me a fool:

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the thing is sufficiently plain; and this opinion on the part of Outis is what mankind have agreed to denominate an idea; and this idea is also entertained by Mr. Aldrich and by Mr. Longfellow, and by Mrs. Outis and her seven children, and by Mrs. Aldrich and hers, and by Mrs. Longfellow and hers—including the grandchildren and great-grandchildren, if any, who will be instructed to transmit the idea in unadulterated purity down an infinite vista of generations yet to come. And of this idea thus extensively entertained, it would really be a very difficult thing to vary the expression in any material degree. A remarkable similarity would be brought about, indeed, by the desire of the parties in question to put the thought into as compendious a form as possible, by way of bringing it to a focus at once and having done with it upon the spot.

Outis will perceive, therefore, that I have every desire in the world to afford him that "fair play" which he considers "a jewel," since I admit not only the possibility of the class of coincidences for which he contends, but even the impossibility of there not existing just as many of these coincidences as he may consider necessary to make out his case. One of the species he details as follows, at some length:

"Some years ago, a letter was written from some part of New England, describing one of those scenes,

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not very common, during what is called 'the January thaw,' when the snow, mingled with rain, and freezing as it falls, forms a perfect covering of ice upon every object. The storm clears away suddenly, and the moon comes up. The letter proceeds: 'Every tree and shrub, as far as the eye can reach, of pure transparent glass—a perfect garden of moving, waving, breathing crystals. . . . Every tree is a diamond chandelier, with a whole constellation of stars clustering to every socket,' etc. This letter was laid away where such things usually are, in a private drawer, and did not see the light for many years. But the very next autumn brought out, among the splendid annuals got up in the country, a beautiful poem from Whittier, describing the same, or rather a similar scene, in which the line

The trees, like crystal chandeliers,

was put in italics by every reviewer in the land for the exceeding beauty of the imagery. Now, the letter was written, probably, about the same time with the poem, though the poem was not published till nearly a year after. The writers were not, and never have been, acquainted with each other, and neither could possibly have seen the work of the other before writing. Now, was there any plagiarism here?"

After the fashion of Outis himself I shall answer his

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query by another. What has the question whether the chandelier friend committed a plagiarism to do with the question whether the death-bed friend committed a plagiarism, or whether it is possible or impossible that plagiarism, generally, can be committed? But merely for courtesy's sake, I step aside from the exact matter in hand. In the case mentioned I should consider material differences in the terms of description as more remarkable than coincidences. Since the tree really looked like a chandelier, the true wonder would have been in likening it to anything else. Of course, nine commonplace men out of ten would have maintained it to be a chandelier-looking tree. No poet of any pretension, however, would have committed himself so far as to put such a similitude in print. The chandelier might have been poetically likened to the crystallized tree, but the converse is a platitude. The gorgeous unaltered handiwork of nature is alway degraded by comparison with the tawdry gewgaws of art; and perhaps the very ugliest thing in the world is a chandelier. If "every reviewer in the land put the passage into italics on account of the exceeding beauty of the imagery," then every printer's devil in the land should have been flogged for not taking it out of italics upon the spot and putting it in the plainest roman, which is too good for it by one half.

I put no faith in the *nil admirari*, and am apt to be

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amazed at every second thing which I see. One of the most amazing things I have yet seen is the complacency with which Outis throws to the right and left his anonymous assertions, taking it for granted that, because he (Nobody) asserts them, I must believe them as a matter of course. However, he is quite in the right. I am perfectly ready to admit anything that he pleases, and am prepared to put as implicit faith in his *ipse dixit* as the Bishop of Autun did in the Bible—on the ground that he knew nothing about it at all. We will understand it, then, not merely as an anonymous assertion, but as an absolute fact, that the two chandelier authors “were not and never have been acquainted with each other, and that neither could have seen the work of the other before writing.” We will agree to understand all this as indisputable truth, I say, through motives of the purest charity, for the purpose of assisting a friend out of trouble, and without reference to the consideration that no third person short of Signor Blitz or Professor Rogers could in any conceivable manner have satisfied himself of the truth of the twentieth part of it. Admitting this and everything else to be as true as the Pentateuch, it follows that plagiarism in the case in question was a thing that could not by any possibility be; and do I rightly comprehend Outis as demonstrating the impossibility of plagiarism, where it is possible, by adducing instances of inevitable similarity under circumstances where it

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is not ? The fact is, that through want of space and time to follow Outis through the labyrinth of impertinences in which he is scrambling about, I am constrained, much against my sense of decorum, to place him in the highroad of his argument, so that he may see where he is, and what he is doing, and what it is that he is endeavoring to demonstrate.

He wishes to show, then, that Mr. Longfellow is innocent of the imitation with which I have charged him, and that Mr. Aldrich is innocent of the plagiarism with which I have not charged him; and this duplicate innocence is expected to be proved by showing the possibility that a certain, or that any uncertain series of coincidences may be the result of pure accident. Now, of course, I cannot be sure that Outis will regard my admission as a service or a disservice, but I admit the possibility at once; and not only this, but I would admit it as a possibility were the coincidences a billion, and each of the most definitive peculiarity that human ingenuity could conceive. But in admitting this I admit just nothing at all, so far as the advancement of Outis's proper argument is concerned. The affair is one of probabilities altogether, and can be satisfactorily settled only by reference to their calculus.

"Pray," inquires Outis of Mr. Willis, "did you ever think the worse of Dana because your friend John Neal charged him with pirating upon Paul Allen, and Bryant, too, in his poem of 'THE DYING RAVEN?'" I

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am sincerely disposed to give Outis his due, and will not pretend to deny his happy facility in asking irrelevant questions. In the present case we can only imagine Mr. Willis's reply: "My dear sir," he might say, "I certainly do not think much the worse of Mr. Dana because Mr. Neal charged him with the piracy, but be so kind as not to inquire what might have been my opinion had there been any substantiation of the charge." I quote Outis's inquiry, however, not so much to insist upon its singular luminousness, as to call attention to the argument embodied in the capital letters of "THE DYING RAVEN."

Now, were I, in any spasm of perversity, to direct Outis's catechetical artillery against himself, and demand of him explicitly his reasons for causing those three words to be printed in capitals, what in the world would he do for a reply? As a matter of course, for some moments he would be profoundly embarrassed; but, being a true man, and a chivalrous one, as all defenders of Mr. Longfellow must be, he could not fail, in the end, to admit that they were so printed for the purpose of safely insinuating a charge which not even an Outis had the impudence openly to utter. Let us imagine his thoughts while carefully twice underscoring the words. Is it impossible that they ran thus?—"I am perfectly well aware, to be sure, that the only conceivable resemblance between Mr. Bryant's poem and Mr. Poe's poem lies in their common

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reference to a raven; but then, what I am writing will be seen by some who have not read Mr. Bryant's poem and by many who have never heard of Mr. Poe's, and among these classes I shall be able to do Mr. Poe a serious injustice and injury by conveying the idea that there is really sufficient similarity to warrant that charge of plagiarism which I, Outis, the 'acquaintance of Mr. Longfellow,' am too high-minded and too merciful to prefer."

Now, I do not pretend to be positive that any such thoughts as these ever entered the brain of Outis. Nor will I venture to designate the whole insinuation as a specimen of "carping littleness, too paltry for any man who values his reputation as a gentleman": for, in the first place, the whole matter, as I have put it, is purely supposititious; and, in the second, I should furnish ground for a new insinuation of the same character, inasmuch as I should be employing Outis's identical words. The fact is, Outis has happened upon the idea that the most direct method of rebutting one accusation is to get up another. By showing that I have committed a sin, he proposes to show that Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Longfellow have not. Leaving the underscored "DYING RAVEN" to argue its own case, he proceeds, therefore, as follows:

"Who, for example, would wish to be guilty of the littleness of detracting from the uncommon merit of

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that remarkable poem of this same Mr. Poe's, recently published in the *Mirror*, from the *American Review*, entitled *The Raven*, by charging him with the paltriness of imitation? And yet some snarling critic, who might envy the reputation he had not the genius to secure for himself, might refer to the frequent, very forcible, but rather quaint repetition, in the last two lines of many of the stanzas, as a palpable imitation of the manner of Coleridge, in several stanzas of *The Ancient Mariner*. Let me put them together. Mr. Poe says:

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore,
Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery explore.

And again:

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore,
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore.

Mr. Coleridge says (running two lines into one):

For all averred I had killed the bird, that made the breeze to
blow.

"Ah, wretch!" said they, "the bird to slay, that made the
breeze to blow."

And again:

They all averred I had killed the bird, that brought the fog and
mist.

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"'T was right," said they, "such birds to slay, that bring the fog and mist."

The "rather quaint" is ingenious. Fully one third of whatever effect *The Raven* has, is wrought by the quaintness in question—a point elaborately introduced to accomplish a well-considered purpose. What idea would Outis entertain of me were I to speak of his defence of his friends as very decent, very respectable, but rather meritorious? In the passages collated there are two points upon which the "snarling critic" might base his insinuation, if ever so weak a "snarling critic" existed. Of these two points one is purely hypothetical, that is to say, it is disingenuously manufactured by Mr. Longfellow's acquaintance to suit his own purposes, or, perhaps, the purposes of the imaginary "snarling critic." The argument of the second point is demolished by my not only admitting it, but insisting upon it. Perhaps the least tedious mode of refuting Outis is to acknowledge nine tenths of everything he may think proper to say.

But, in the present instance, what am I called upon to acknowledge? I am charged with imitating the repetition of phrase in the two concluding lines of a stanza, and of imitating this from Coleridge. But why not extend the accusation and insinuate that I imitate it from everybody else? for certainly there is no poet living or dead who has not put in practice the

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identical effect—the well-understood effect of the refrain. Is Outis's argument to the end that I have no right to this thing for the reason that all the world has? If this is not his argument, will he be kind enough to inform me (at his leisure) what it is? Or is he prepared to confess himself so absurdly uninformed as not to know that whatever a poet claims on the score of original versification, is claimed not on account of any individual rhythmical or metrical effects (for none are individually original), but solely on account of the novelty of his combinations of old effects? The hypothesis, or manufacture, consists in the alteration of Coleridge's metre, with the view of forcing it into a merely ocular similarity with my own, and thus of imposing upon some one or two grossly ignorant readers. I give the verses of Coleridge as they are:

For all averred, I had killed the bird,
That made the breeze to blow.
"Ah, wretch," said they, "the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow.

The verses beginning, "They all averred," etc., are arranged in the same manner. Now, I have taken it for granted that it is Outis's design to impose the idea of similarity between my lines and those of Coleridge upon some one or two grossly ignorant individuals; at the same time, whoever attempts such an imposi-

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tion is rendered liable at least to the suspicion of very gross ignorance himself. The ignorance or the knavery are the two uncomfortable horns of his dilemma.

Let us see. Coleridge's lines are arranged in quatrains, mine in couplets. His first and third lines rhyme at the close of the second and fourth feet; mine flow continuously, without rhyme. His metre, briefly defined, is alternately tetrameter acatalectic and trimeter acatalectic; mine is uniformly octameter catalectic. It might be expected, however, that at least the rhythm would prove to be identical, but not so. Coleridge's is iambic (varied in the third foot of the first line with an anapæst); mine is the exact converse, trochaic. The fact is, that neither in rhythm, metre, stanza, or rhyme is there even a single point of approximation throughout; the only similarity being the wickedly or sillily manufactured one of Outis himself, appealing from the ears to the eyes of the most uncultivated classes of the rabble. The ingenuity and validity of the manufacture might be approached, although certainly not paralleled, by an attempt to show that blue and yellow pigments, standing unmixed at separate ends of a studio, were equivalent to green. I say "not paralleled," for even the mixing of the pigments, in the case of Outis, would be very far, as I have shown, from producing the supposititious effect. Coleridge's lines, written together, would result in rhymed iambic heptameter acatalectic, while mine are

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unrhymed trochaic octameter catalectic, differing in every conceivable circumstance. A closer parallel than the one I have imagined would be the demonstration that two are equal to four, on the ground that, possessing two dollars, a man will have four when he gets an additional couple—for that the additional couple is somewhere, no one, after due consideration, will deny.

If Outis will now take a seat upon one of the horns of his dilemma, I will proceed to the third variation of the charges insinuated through the medium of the "snarling critic," in the passage heretofore quoted.¹

The first point to be attended to is the "ten to one that I never saw it before." Ten to one that I never did; but Outis might have remembered that twenty to one I should like to see it. In accusing either Mr. Aldrich or Mr. Hood, I printed their poems together and in full. But an anonymous gentleman rebuts my accusation by telling me that there is a certain similarity between a poem of my own and an anonymous poem which he has before him, and which he would like to transcribe if it were not too long. He contents himself, therefore, with giving me from this too long poem three stanzas which are shown, by a series of intervening periods, to have been culled, to suit his own purposes, from different portions of the poem, but which (again to suit his own purposes) he places before the public in consecutive connection! The least

¹ "I have before me" to "part of such comparison," *ante*, pp. 156, 157.

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that can be said of the whole statement is that it is deliciously frank; but, upon the whole, the poem will look quite as well before me as before Outis, whose time is too much occupied to transcribe it. I, on the other hand, am entirely at leisure, and will transcribe and print the whole of it with the greatest pleasure in the world, provided always that it is not too long to refer to, too long to have its whereabouts pointed out, as I half suspect, from Outis's silence on the subject, that it is. One thing I will take it upon myself to say, in the spirit of prophecy: whether the poem in question is or is not in existence (and we have only Nobody's word that it is), the passages as quoted are not in existence, except as quoted by Outis, who, in some particulars, I maintain, has falsified the text, for the purpose of forcing a similarity, as in the case of the verses of Coleridge. All this I assert in the spirit of prophecy, while we await the forthcoming of the poem. In the meantime, we will estimate the "identities" with reference to *The Raven* as collated with the passages culled by Outis, granting him everything he is weak enough to imagine I am in duty bound to grant, admitting that the poem as a whole exists, that the words and lines are ingeniously written, that the stanzas have the connection and sequence he gives them, and that, although he has been already found guilty of chicanery in one instance, he is at least entirely innocent in this.

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He has established, he says, fifteen identities, "and that, too, without a word of rhythm, metre, or stanza, which should never form a part of such comparison"; by which, of course, we are to understand that with the rhythm, metre, and stanza (omitted only because they should never form a part of such comparison) he would have succeeded in establishing eighteen. Now, I insist that rhythm, metre, and stanza should form and must form a part of the comparison, and I will presently demonstrate what I say. I also insist, therefore, since he could find me guilty if he would upon these points, that guilty he must and shall find me upon the spot. He then distinctly has established eighteen identities, and I proceed to examine them one by one.

"First," he says, "in each case the poet is a broken-hearted lover." Not so; my poet has no indication of a broken heart. On the contrary, he lives triumphantly in the expectation of meeting his Lenore in Aidenn, and is so indignant with the raven for maintaining that the meeting will never take place as to call him a liar and order him out of the house. Not only is my lover not a broken-hearted one, but I have been at some pains to show that broken hearts and matters of that kind are improperly made the subject of poems. I refer to a chapter of the articles entitled *Marginalia*. "Second," says Outis, "that lover longs for some hereafter communion with the departed." In

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my poem there is no expression of any such longing; the nearest approach to it is the triumphant consciousness which forms the thesis and staple of the whole. In Outis's poem the nearest approach to the "longing" is contained in the lover's request to the bird to repeat a strain that assures him (the lover) that it (the bird) has known the lost mistress. "Third, there is a bird," says Outis. So there is. Mine, however, is a raven, and we may take it for granted that Outis's is either a nightingale or a cockatoo. "Fourth, the bird is at the poet's window." As regards my poem, true; as regards Outis's, not; the poet only requests the bird to come to the window. "Fifth, the bird, being at the poet's window, makes a noise." The fourth specification failing, the fifth, which depends upon it, as a matter of course fails too. "Sixth, making a noise attracts the attention of the poet." The fifth specification failing, the sixth, which depends upon it, fails, likewise, and as a matter of course, as before. "Seventh, [the poet] was half-asleep, dozing, dreaming." False altogether; only my poet was "napping," and this in the commencement of the poem, which is occupied with realities and waking action. Outis's poet is fast asleep and dreams everything. "Eighth, the poet invites the bird to come in." Another palpable failure. Outis's poet, indeed, asked his bird in; but my raven walked in without any invitation. "Ninth, a confabulation ensues." As regards my poem, true;

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but there is not a word of any consolation in Outis's. "Tenth, the bird is supposed to be a visitor from the land of spirits." As regards Outis's poem, this is true only if we give a wide interpretation to the phrase "realms of light." In my poem the bird is not only not from the world of spirits, but I have specifically conveyed the idea of his having escaped from "some unhappy master," of whom he had caught the word "nevermore"; in the concluding stanza, it is true, I suddenly convert him into an allegorical emblem or personification of Mournful Remembrance, out of the shadow of which the poet is "lived nevermore." "Eleventh, allusion is made to the departed." Admitted. "Twelfth, the intimation is given that the bird knew something of the departed." True as regards Outis's poem only. No such intimation is given in mine. "Thirteenth, that he knew her worth and loveliness." Again, true only as regards Outis's poem. It should be observed here that I have disproved the twelfth and thirteenth specifications purely for form's sake; they are nothing more than disingenuous repetitions of the eleventh. The "allusion to the departed" is the "intimation," and the intimation is that "he knew her worth and loveliness." "Fourteenth, the bird seems willing to linger with the poet." True only as regards my poem; in Outis's (as quoted) there is nothing of the kind. "Fifteenth, there is a repetition, in the second and fourth lines, of a part, and that the

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emphatic part, of the first and third." What is here asserted is true only of the first stanza quoted by Outis, and of the commencement of the third. There is nothing of it in the second. In my poem there is nothing of it at all, with the exception of the repetition in the refrain, occurring at the fifth line of my stanza of six. I quote a stanza, by way of rendering every thing perfectly intelligible and affording Outis his much-coveted "fair play":

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked,
upstarting,
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian
shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath
spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off
my door!"

Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

Sixteenth, concerns the rhythm. Outis's is iambic; mine the exact converse, trochaic. Seventeenth, regards the metre. Outis's is hexameter, alternating with pentameter, both acatalectic.¹ Mine is octameter

¹ This is as accurate a description as can be given of the alternating (of the second and fourth) lines in a few words. The fact is, they are indescribable without more trouble than they are worth, and seem to me either to have been written by some one ignorant of the principles of verse, or to be misquoted. The line, however,

That tells me thou hast seen and loved my Clare,

answers the description I have given of the alternating verses, and was, no doubt, the general intention of all of them.

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acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the refrain of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Eighteenth, and last, has respect to the stanza, that is to say, to the general arrangement of the metre into masses. Of Outis's I need only say that it is a very common and certainly a very stupid one. My own has at least the merit of being my own. No writer, living or dead, has ever employed anything resembling it. The innumerable specific differences between it and that of Outis's it would be a tedious matter to point out, but a far less difficult matter than to designate one individual point of similarity.

And now, what are we to think of the eighteen identities of Outis,—the fifteen that he establishes and the three that he could establish if he would,—that is to say, if he could only bring himself to be so unmerciful? Of the whole eighteen, sixteen have shown themselves to be lamentable failures, having no more substantial basis than sheer misrepresentation, “too paltry for any man who values his reputation as a gentleman and a scholar,” and depending altogether for effect upon the chances that nobody would take the trouble to investigate their falsehood or their truth. Two—the third and the eleventh—are sustained; and these two show that in both poems there is “an allusion to the departed,” and that in both poems there is “a bird.” The first idea that suggests itself, at this

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point, is, whether not to have a bird and not to have an allusion to a deceased mistress, would not be the truer features of distinctiveness after all, whether two poems which have not these items might not be more rationally charged with similarity than any two poems which have. But having thus disproved all the identities of Outis (for any one comprehending the principle of proof in such cases will admit that two only, are in effect just nothing at all), I am quite ready, by way again of affording him "fair play," to expunge everything that has been said on the subject, and proceed as if every one of these eighteen identities were in the first bloom and deepest blush of a demonstration.

I might grant them as demonstrated, to be sure, on the ground which I have already touched, that to prove me or anybody else an imitator is no mode of showing that Mr. Aldrich or Mr. Longfellow is not. But I might safely admit them on another and equally substantial consideration, which seems to have been overlooked by the zeal of Outis altogether. He has clearly forgotten that the mere number of such coincidences proves nothing, because at any moment we can oblige it to prove too much. It is the easiest thing imaginable to suggest, and even to do that which Outis has failed in doing,—to demonstrate a practically infinite series of identities between any two compositions in the world; but it by no means follows that all compositions in the world have a similarity one with the

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other in any comprehensible sense of the term. I mean to say that regard must be had not only to the number of the coincidences, but to the peculiarity of each, this peculiarity growing less and less necessary, and the effect of number more and more important, in a ratio prodigiously accumulative as the investigation progresses. And again, regard must be had not only to the number and peculiarity of the coincidences, but to the antagonistic differences, if any, which surround them, and very especially to the space over which the coincidences are spread, and the number or paucity of the events, or incidents, from among which the coincidences are selected. When Outis, for example, picks out his eighteen coincidences (which I am now granting as sustained) from a poem so long as *The Raven*, in collation with a poem not forthcoming, and which may, therefore, for anything anybody knows to the contrary, be as long as an infinite flock of ravens, he is merely putting himself to unnecessary trouble in getting together phantoms of arguments that can have no substance wherewith to aid his demonstration, until the ascertained extent of the unknown poem from which they are culled affords them a purpose and a palpability. Can any man doubt that between the *Iliad* and the *Paradise Lost* there might be established even a thousand very idiosyncratic identities?—and yet is any man fool enough to maintain that the *Iliad* is the only original of the *Paradise Lost*?

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But how is it in the case of Messieurs Aldrich and Hood? The poems here are both remarkably brief, and as I have every intention to do justice and no other intention in the world, I shall be pardoned for again directing attention to them.

Let it be understood that I am entirely uninformed as to which of these two poems was first published. And so little has the question of priority to do with my thesis, that I shall not put myself to the trouble of inquiring. What I maintain is, that there are sufficient grounds for belief that one is plagiarized from the other. Who is the original, and who is the plagiarist, are points I leave to be settled by any one who thinks the matter of sufficient consequence to give it his attention. But the man who shall deny the plagiarism abstractly—what is it that he calls upon us to believe? First, that two poets, in remote parts of the world, conceived the idea of composing a poem on the subject of Death. Of course, there is nothing remarkable in this. Death is a naturally poetic theme, and suggests itself by a seeming spontaneity to every poet in the world. But had the subject chosen by the two widely separated poets been even strikingly peculiar,—had it been, for example, a porcupine, a piece of gingerbread, or anything unlikely to be made the subject of a poem, still no sensible person would have insisted upon the single coincidence as anything beyond a single coincidence. We have no difficulty, therefore,

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in believing what, so far, we are called upon to believe. Secondly, we must credit that the two poets concluded to write not only on death, but on the death of a woman. Here the mind, observing the two identities, reverts to their peculiarity or non-peculiarity, and finding no peculiarity, admitting that the death of a woman is a naturally suggested poetic subject, has no difficulty also in admitting the two coincidences as such, and nothing beyond. Thirdly, we are called upon to believe that the two poets not only concluded to write upon death, and upon the death of a woman, but that, from the innumerable phases of death, the phase of tranquillity was happened upon by each. Here the intellect commences a slight rebellion, but it is quieted by the admission, partly, of the spontaneity with which such an idea might arise, and partly of the possibility of the coincidences, independently of the consideration of spontaneity. Fourthly, we are required to believe that the two poets happened not only upon death, the death of a woman, and the tranquil death of a woman, but upon the idea of representing this woman as lying tranquilly throughout the whole night, in spite of the infinity of different durations which might have been imagined for her trance of tranquillity. At this point the reason perceives the evidence against these coincidences (as such and nothing more) to be increasing in geometrical ratio. It discards all idea of spontaneity, and, if it yield credence at all, yields it

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altogether on the ground of the indisputable possibility. Fifthly, we are requested to believe that our poets happened not only upon death, upon the death of a woman, upon the tranquil death of a woman, and upon the lying of this woman tranquilly throughout the night, but, also, upon the idea of selecting, from the innumerable phases which characterize a tranquil death-bed, the identical one of soft breathing, employing also the identical word. Here the reason gives up the endeavor to believe that one poem has not been suggested by the other; if it be a reason accustomed to deal with the mathematical calculus of probabilities, it has abandoned this endeavor at the preceding stage of the investigation. The evidence of suggestion has now become prodigiously accumulate. Each succeeding coincidence, however slight, is proof not merely added, but multiplied by hundreds of thousands. Sixthly, we are called upon to believe, not only that the two poets happened upon all this, together with the idea of the soft breathing, but also of employing the identical word "breathing" in the same line with the identical word "night." This proposition the reason receives with a smile. Seventhly, however, we are required to admit, not only all that has already been found inadmissible, but, in addition, that the two poets conceived the idea of representing the death of a woman as occurring precisely at the same instant, out of all the infinite instants of all time. This proposition the reason

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receives only with a sneer. Eighthly, we are called upon to acquiesce in the assertion that not only all these improbabilities are probable, but that in addition again, the two poets happened upon the idea of representing the woman as stepping immediately into paradise; and, ninthly, that both should not only happen upon all this, but upon the idea of writing a peculiarly brief poem on so admirably suggestive a thesis; and, tenthly, that out of the various rhythms, that is to say, variations of poetic feet, they should have both happened upon the iambus; and, eleventhly, that out of the absolutely infinite metres that may be contrived from this rhythm, they should both have hit upon the tetrameter acatalectic for the first and third lines of a stanza; and, twelfthly, upon the trimeter acatalectic for the second and fourth; and, thirteenthly, upon an absolute identity of phrase at, fourteenthly, an absolutely identical position, viz., upon the phrases, "But when the morn," etc., and "But when the sun," etc., occurring in the beginning of the first line in the last stanza of each poem; and, fifteenthly and lastly, that of the vast multitude of appropriate titles, they should both have happened upon one whose identity is interfered with at all only by the difference between the definite and the indefinite article.

Now, the chances that these fifteen coincidences, so peculiar in character, and all occurring within the compass of eight short lines on the one part, and six-

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teen on the other—the chances, I say, that these coincidences are merely accidental may be estimated, possibly, as about one to one hundred millions; and any man who reasons at all is, of course, grossly insulted in being called upon to credit them as accidental.

“I have written what I have written,” says Outis, “from no personal motives, but simply because, from my earliest reading of reviews and critical notices, I have been disgusted with this wholesale mangling of victims without rhyme or reason.” I have already agreed to believe implicitly everything asserted by the anonymous Outis, and am fully prepared to admit, even, his own contradiction, in one sentence, of what he has insisted upon in the sentence preceding. I shall assume it is indisputable, then (since Nobody says it), that, first, he has no acquaintance with myself and “some acquaintance with Mr. Longfellow,” and, secondly, that he has “written what he has written from no personal motives whatever.” That he has been disgusted with “the mangling of victims without rhyme or reason” is, to be sure, a little unaccountable, for the victims without rhyme or reason are precisely the victims that ought to be mangled; but that he has been disgusted “from his earliest reading,” with critical notices and reviews is credible enough if we but imagine his “earliest reading” and earliest writing to have taken place about the same epoch of time.

But, to be serious; if Outis has his own private

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reasons for being disgusted with what he terms the "wholesale mangling of victims without rhyme or reason," there is not a man living, of common sense and common honesty, who has not better reason (if possible) to be disgusted with the insufferable cant and shameless misrepresentation practised habitually by just such persons as Outis, with the view of decrying by sheer strength of lungs, of trampling down, of rioting down, of mobbing down any man with a soul that bids him come out from among the general corruption of our public press, and take his stand upon the open ground of rectitude and honor. The Outises who practice this species of bullyism are, as a matter of course, anonymous. They are either the "victims without rhyme or reason who have been mangled by wholesale," or they are the relatives, or the relatives of the relatives of the "victims without rhyme or reason who have been mangled by wholesale." Their watchwords are "carping littleness," "envious malignity," and "personal abuse." Their low artifices are insinuated calumnies and indefatigable whispers of regret, from post to pillar, that "Mr. So-and-So, or Mr. This-and-That will persist in rendering himself so dreadfully unpopular," no one, in the meantime, being more thoroughly and painfully aware than these very Outises that the unpopularity of the just critic who reasons his way, guiltless of dogmatism, is confined altogether within the limits of the influence of

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the victims without rhyme and reason who have been mangled by wholesale. Even the manifest injustice of a Gifford is, I grieve to say, an exceedingly popular thing; and there is no literary element of popularity more absolutely and more universally effective than the pungent impartiality of a Wilson or a Macaulay. In regard to my own course, without daring to arrogate to myself a single other quality of either of these eminent men than that pure contempt for mere prejudice and conventionality which actuated them all, I will now unscrupulously call the attention of the Outises to the fact that it was during what they (the Outises) would insinuate to be the unpopularity of my "wholesale mangling of the victims without rhyme and reason" that, in one year, the circulation of the *Southern Messenger* (a five-dollar journal) extended itself from seven hundred to nearly five thousand; and that, in little more than twice the same time, *Graham's Magazine* swelled its list from five thousand to fifty-two thousand subscribers.

I make no apology for these egotisms, and I proceed with them without hesitation; for, in myself, I am but defending a set of principles which no honest man need be ashamed of defending, and for whose defence no honest man will consider an apology required. The usual watchwords of the Outises when repelling a criticism, their customary charges, overt or insinuated, are (as I have already said) those of "personal abuse"

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and "wholesale (or indiscriminate) mangling." In the present instance the latter solely is employed; for not even an Outis can accuse me, with even a decent show of verisimilitude, of having ever descended, in the most condemnatory of my reviews, to that personal abuse which, upon one or two occasions, has indeed been levelled at myself in the spasmodic endeavors of aggrieved authors to rebut what I have ventured to demonstrate. I have, then, to refute only the accusation of mangling by wholesale, and I refute it by the simplest reference to fact. What I have written remains; and is readily accessible in any of our public libraries. I have had one or two impotent enemies and a multitude of cherished friends, and both friends and enemies have been, for the most part, literary people; yet no man can point to a single critique, among the very numerous ones which I have written during the last ten years, which is either wholly fault-finding or wholly in approbation; nor is there an instance to be discovered, among all that I have published, of my having set forth, either in praise or censure, a single opinion upon any critical topic of moment, without attempting, at least, to give it authority by something that wore the semblance of a reason. Now, is there a writer in the land who, having dealt in criticism even one fourth as much as myself, can of his own criticisms conscientiously say the same? The fact is, that very many of the most eminent men

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of America, whom I am proud to number among the sincerest of my friends, have been rendered so solely by their approbation of my comments upon their own works,—comments in great measure directed against themselves as authors,—belonging altogether to that very class of criticism which it is the petty policy of the Outises to cry down, with their diminutive voices, as offensive on the score of wholesale vituperation and personal abuse. If, to be brief, in what I have put forth there has been a preponderance of censure over commendation, is there not to be imagined for this preponderance a more charitable motive than any which the Outises have been magnanimous enough to assign me; is not this preponderance, in a word, the natural and inevitable tendency of all criticism worth the name in this age of so universal an authorship, that no man in his senses will pretend to deny the vast predominance of good writers over bad?

“And now” says Outis “for the matter of Longfellow’s imitations, in what do they consist? The critic is not very specific in this charge. Of what kind are they? Are they imitations of thought? Why not call them plagiarisms, then, and show them up? Or are they only verbal imitations of style? Perhaps this is one of them, in his poem on the *Sea Weed*:

drifting, drifting, drifting,
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main,

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resembling in form and collocation only, a line in a beautiful and very powerful poem of Mr. Edgar A. Poe. (Write it rather Edgar, a Poet, and then it is right to a T.) I have not the poem before me, and have forgotten its title. But he is describing a magnificent intellect in ruins, if I remember rightly, and, speaking of the eloquence of its better days, represents it as

flowing, flowing, flowing,
Like a river.

“Is this what the critic means? Is it such imitations as this that he alludes to? If not, I am at fault, either in my reading of Longfellow, or in my general familiarity with the American poets. If this be the kind of imitation referred to, permit me to say, the charge is too paltry for any man who valued his reputation as a gentleman or a scholar.”

Elsewhere he says:

“Moreover, this poem contains an example of that kind of repetition which I have supposed the critic meant to charge upon Longfellow as one of his imitations:

Away—away—away, etc.

“I might pursue it farther, but I will not. Such criticisms only make the author of them contemptible, without soiling a plume in the cap of his victim.”

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The first point to be here observed is the complacency with which Outis supposes me to make a certain charge and then vituperates me for his own absurd supposition. Were I, or any man, to accuse Mr. Longfellow of imitation on the score of thrice employing a word in consecutive connection, then I (or any man) would only be guilty of as great a sotticism as was Outis in accusing me of imitation on the score of the refrain. The repetition in question is assuredly not claimed by myself as original; I should therefore be wary how I charged Mr. Longfellow with imitating it from myself. It is, in fact, a musical effect which is the common property of all mankind, and has been their common property for ages. Nevertheless, the quotation of this

drifting, drifting, drifting,

is, on the part of Outis, a little unfortunate. Most certainly the supposed imitation had never been observed by me; nor even, had I observed it, should I have considered it individually, as a point of any moment; but all will admit (since Outis himself has noticed the parallel), that, were a second parallel of any obviousness to be established from the same brief poem, the *Sea Weed*, this second would come in very strong corroboration of the first. Now the sixth stanza of this very *Sea Weed* (which was first published in *Graham's Magazine* for January, 1845) commences with

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From the far-off isles enchanted;

and in a little poem of my own, addressed *To Mary*, and first published at page 636 of the first volume of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, will be found the lines:

And thus thy memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea.

But to show, in general, what I mean by accusing Mr. Longfellow of imitation, I collate his *Midnight Mass for the Dying Year*, with *The Death of the Old Year* of Tennyson.

MIDNIGHT MASS FOR THE DYING YEAR

Yes, the Year is growing old,
And his eye is pale and bleared!
Death, with frosty hand and cold,
Plucks the old man by the beard,
Sorely, sorely!

The leaves are falling, falling,
Solemnly and slow;
Caw! caw! the rooks are calling,
It is a sound of woe,
A sound of woe!

Through woods and mountain passes
The winds, like anthems, roll;
They are chanting solemn masses,
Singing, "Pray for this poor soul,
Pray, pray!"

The Fall of the House of Usher
The Fall of the House of Usher
The Fall of the House of Usher
The Fall of the House of Usher

THE DYING YEAR

BY THE AUTHOR

THE author of my other, well-known *The Fall of the House of Usher*, has now issued at publication the first of a series of *Literary Essays*. In all will be found the

And this story is a little more
Like some eternal and far-distant
In some far-distant sea.

But to give, in general, what I mean by accusing Mr. Poe of "sophistication," I collate his *Midnight Mass* or *the Dying Year* with *The Death of the Old Year* of Tenney and *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

"But then with ~~much more~~ ~~the~~ ~~lofty~~ ~~and~~ ~~enshrined~~ ~~figure~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Lady~~ ~~Madeline~~ ~~of~~ ~~Usher.~~"

He is growing old,

His eye is pale and bleared!

With frosty hand and cold,

He racks the old man by the beard,

Sorely, sorely!

The leaves are falling, falling,

So solemnly and slow;

Crow! caw! the rooks are calling,

It is a sound of woe,

A sound of woe!

Through woods and mountain passes

The winds, like anthems, roll;

They are chanting solemn masses,

Singing, "Pray for this poor soul,

Pray, pray!"



[illegible]

and the *Journal of my own*, a revised *Table*
of the *Journal* and *Table* of the first vol.
of *Literary* *Journal*, will be found

* I've flyed out to meet me
 some en' for off is e
 some tul u s s o d.

For the second time, then, what I mean by accusing Mr. Poe is that, in *Midnight Mass*, I detect his *Midnight Mass*. For the *Drinking Year* is like *The Death of the Old Year* or *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

"But then with ~~that~~ those ~~THE DYING YEAR~~ THE DYING YEAR the lofty and enshrouded figure of the Lady Madeline of Usher."

A little, little and heard!
 Then, with a cry hard and cold,
 Plucks the women by the beard,
 Says, "Sow, sow!"

The leaves are falling, fading,
 Sighing and snow;
 Caw! caw! the crows are calling,
 It is a land of woe,
 A land of woe!

"I was second married twice
and, like all his, tall;
and I taught French classes,
and "Pray for the poor soul,
and pray!"



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And the hooded clouds, like friars,
Tell their beads in drops of rain,
And patter their doleful prayers;
But their prayers are all in vain,
All in vain!

There he stands in the foul weather,
The foolish, fond Old Year,
Crowned with wild flowers and with heather
Like weak, despised Lear,
A king, a king!

Then comes the summer-like day,
Bids the old man rejoice!
His joy! his last! Oh, the old man gray,
Loveth her ever-soft voice,
Gentle and low!

To the crimson woods he saith,
To the voice gentle and low
Of the soft air, like a daughter's breath,
"Pray do not mock me so!
Do not laugh at me!"

And now the sweet day is dead;
Cold in his arms it lies;
No stain from its breath is spread
Over the glassy skies,
No mist nor stain!

Then, too, the Old Year dieth,
And the forests utter a moan,
Like the voice of one who crieth
In the wilderness alone,
"Vex not his ghost!"

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Then comes, with an awful roar,
Gathering and sounding on,
The storm-wind from Labrador,
The wind Euroclydon,
The storm-wind!

Howl! howl! and from the forest
Sweep the red leaves away!
Would the sins that thou abhorrest,
O soul! could thus decay,
And be swept away!

For there shall come a mightier blast,
There shall be a darker day;
And the stars, from heaven down-cast
Like red leaves be swept away!
Kyrie, eleyson!
Christe, eleyson!

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing;
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly, and speak low,
For the Old Year lies a-dying.
Old Year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old Year, you shall not die.

He lieth still; he doth not move;
He will not see the dawn of day;
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,

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And the New Year will take 'em away.

Old Year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old Year, you shall not go.

He frothed his bumpers to the brim;

A jollier year we shall not see;
But though his eyes are waxing dim,
And though his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.

Old Year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I 've half a mind to die with you,
Old Year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,

But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he 'll be dead before.

Every one for his own;
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New Year, blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! Over the snow

I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro;
The cricket chirps; the light burns low;
'T is nearly one o'clock.

Shake hands before you die;
Old Year, we 'll dearly rue for you,

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What is it we can do for you ?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone!
Close up his eyes; tie up his chin;
Step from the corpee, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There 's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

I have no idea of commenting, at any length, upon this imitation, which is too palpable to be mistaken, and which belongs to the most barbarous class of literary piracy, that class in which, while the words of the wronged author are avoided, his most intangible, and therefore his least defensible and least reclaimable, property is appropriated. Here, with the exception of lapses which, however, speak volumes (such, for instance, as the use of the capitalized "Old Year," the general peculiarity of the rhythm, and the absence of rhyme at the end of each stanza), there is nothing of a visible or palpable nature by which the source of the American poem can be established. But then nearly all that is valuable in the piece of Tennyson is the first conception of personifying the Old Year as a dying old man, with the singularly wild and fantastic manner in which that conception is carried out.

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Of this conception and of this manner he is robbed. What is here not taken from Tennyson is made up, mosaically, from the death scene of Cordelia, in *Lear*, to which I refer the curious reader.

In *Graham's Magazine* for February, 1843, there appeared a poem, furnished by Professor Longfellow, entitled *The Good George Campbell*, and purporting to be a translation from the German of O. L. B. Wolff. In *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern*, by William Motherwell, published by John Wylie, Glasgow, 1827, is to be found a poem partly compiled and partly written by Motherwell himself. It is entitled *The Bonnie George Campbell*. I give the two side by side:

MOTHERWELL

Hie upon Hielands
And low upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell
Rade out on a day.
Saddled and bridled
And gallant rade he;
Hame cam his gude horse,
But never cam he.

Out cam his auld mither
Greeting fu' sair,
And out cam his bonnie bride
Rivin' her hair.
Saddled and bridled
And bootied rade he;

LONGFELLOW

High on the Highlands,
And deep in the day,
The good George Campbell
Rode free and away.
All saddled, all bridled,
Gay garments he wore;
Home came his gude steed,
But he nevermore!

Out came his mother,
Weeping so sadly;
Out came his beauteous bride
Weeping so madly.
All saddled, all bridled,
Strong armor he wore;

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MOTHERWELL

Toom hame cam the saddle,
But never cam he.

“ My meadow lies green,
And my corn is unshorn;
My barn is too big,
And my baby’s unborn.”

Saddled and bridled
And bootied rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
But never cam he.

LONGFELLOW

Home came the saddle,
But he nevermore!

“ My meadow lies green,
Unreaped is my corn;
My garner is empty,
My child is unborn.”

All saddled, all bridled,
Sharp weapons he bore;
Home came the saddle,
But he nevermore!

Professor Longfellow defends himself (I learn) from the charge of imitation in this case by the assertion that he did translate from Wolff, but that Wolff copied from Motherwell. I am willing to believe almost anything than so gross a plagiarism as this seems to be; but there are difficulties which should be cleared up. In the first place, how happens it that, in the transmission from the Scotch into German, and again from the German into English, not only the versification should have been rigidly preserved, but the rhymes and alliterations? Again, how are we to imagine that Mr. Longfellow, with his known intimate acquaintance with Motherwell’s *Minstrelsy*, did not at once recognize so remarkable a poem when he met it in Wolff? I have now before me a large volume of songs, ballads, etc., collected by Wolff; but there is here no such poem, and, to be sure it should

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not be sought in such a collection. No collection of his own poems has been published, and the piece of which we are in search must be fugitive; unless, indeed, it is included in a volume of translations from various tongues, of which O. L. B. Wolff is also the author, but of which I am unable to obtain a copy.¹ It is by no means improbable that here the poem in question is to be found; but in this case it must have been plainly acknowledged as a translation, with its original designated. How, then, could Professor Longfellow have translated it as original with Wolff? These are mysteries yet to be solved. It is observable—peculiarly so—that the Scotch “Toom” is left untranslated in the version of *Graham's Magazine*. Will it be found that the same omission occurs in Wolff's version?

In *The Spanish Student* of Mr. Longfellow, at page 80, will be found what follows:

“Scene IV.—*Preciosa's chamber. She is sitting with a book in her hand near a table, on which are flowers. A bird singing in its cage. The Count of Lara enters behind, unperceived.*

Preciosa (reads).

All are sleeping, weary heart!

Thou, thou only sleepless art!

¹ Sammlung vorzüglicher Volkslieder der bekanntesten Nationen, grösstentheils zum ersten male, metrisch in das Deutsche übertragen. Frankfurt, 1837.

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Heigho! I wish Victorian were here.
I know not what it is makes me so restless!
Thou little prisoner with thy motley coat,
That from thy vaulted, wiry dungeon singest,
Like thee I am a captive, and, like thee,
I have a gentle gaoler. Lack-a-day!

All are sleeping, weary heart!
Thou, thou only sleepless art!
All this throbbing, all this aching,
Evermore shall keep thee waking,
For a heart in sorrow breaking
Thinketh ever of its smart!

Thou speakest truly, poet! and methinks
More hearts are breaking in this world of ours
Than one would say. In distant villages
And solitudes remote, where winds have wafted
The barbed seeds of love, or birds of passage
Scattered them in their flight, do they take root,
And grow in silence, and in silence perish.
Who hears the falling of the forest leaf?
Or who takes note of every flower that dies?
Heigho! I wish Victorian would come.
Dolores! (*Turns to lay down her book, and perceives*
the Count.) Ha!

Lara. Señora, pardon me!

Preciosa. How 's this? Dolores!

Lara. Pardon me —

Preciosa. Dolores!

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Lara. Be not alarmed; I found no one in waiting.
If I have been too bold —

Preciosa (turning her back upon him). You are too bold!

Retire! retire, and leave me!

Lara. My dear lady,
First hear me! I beseech you, let me speak!
'T is for your good I come.

Preciosa (turning toward him with indignation).
Begone! begone!

You are the Count of Lara, but your deeds
Would make the statues of your ancestors
Blush in their tombs! Is it Castilian honor,
Is it Castilian pride, to steal in here
Upon a friendless girl, to do her wrong?
O shame! shame! shame! that you, a nobleman,
Should be so little noble in your thoughts
As to send jewels here to win my love,
And think to buy my honor with your gold!
I have no words to tell you how I scorn you!
Begone! the sight of you is hateful to me!
Begone, I say!"

A few passages farther on, in the same scene, we meet the following stage directions: "He tries to embrace her, she starts back and draws a dagger from her bosom." A little farther still and "Victorian enters behind." Compare all this with a *Scene from*

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"Politian", An Unpublished Tragedy by Edgar A. Poe, to be found in the second volume of the Southern Literary Messenger.

The scene opens with the following stage directions:

"A lady's apartment, with a window open and looking into a garden. Lalage in deep mourning, reading at a table, on which lie some books and a hand-mirror. In the background, Jacinta leans carelessly on the back of a chair. . . .

Lalage (reading) 'It in another climate,' so he said,
'Bore a bright golden flower, but not i' this soil!'

(pauses, turns over some leaves, and resumes)

'No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower,
But Ocean ever, to refresh mankind,

Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind.'

Oh, beautiful! most beautiful! how like

To what my fevered soul doth dream of heaven!

O happy land! *(pauses)* She died! the maiden died!

O still more happy maiden who couldst die!

Jacinta!

(Jacinta returns no answer, and Lalage presently resumes)

Again! a similar tale

Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea!

Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play:

'She died full young'; one Bossola answers him:

'I think not so—her infelicity

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Seemed to have years too many.' Ah, luckless lady!
Jacinta! (*Still no answer*) Here 's a far sterner story,
But like—oh, very like in its despair—
Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily
A thousand hearts; losing at length her own.
She died. Thus endeth the history; and her maids
Lean over her and weep—two gentle maids
With gentle names, Eiros and Charmion!
Rainbow and Dove! Jacinta! . . .

(*Jacinta, finally in a discussion about certain
jewels, insults her mistress, who bursts into
tears*)

Lalage. Poor Lalage! and is it come to this?
Thy servant-maid! — but courage! 't is but a viper
Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul!
(*taking up the mirror*)

Ha! here at least 's a friend—too much a friend
In earlier days; a friend will not deceive thee.
Fair mirror and true, now tell me (for thou canst)
A tale, a pretty tale, and heed thou not
Though it be rife with woe. It answers me,
It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,
And Beauty long deceased—remembers me
Of Joy departed; Hope, the Seraph Hope,
Inurned and entombed; now, in a tone
Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible
Whispers of early grave untimely yawning
For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true, thou liest not!

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Thou hast no end to gain, no heart to break;
Castiglione lied who said he loved—
Thou true—he false! false! false!

(While she speaks a Monk enters her apartment, and approaches unobserved)

Monk Refuge thou hast,
Sweet daughter, in heaven. Think of eternal things;
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray!

Lalage. *(arising hurriedly)* I cannot pray! My
soul is at war with God!

The frightful sounds of merriment below
Disturb my senses; go! I cannot pray;
The sweet airs from the garden worry me;
Thy presence grieves me: go! thy priestly raiment
Fills me with dread; thy ebony crucifix
With horror and awe!

Monk Think of thy precious soul!

Lalage. Think of my early days! think of my father
And mother in heaven; think of our quiet home,
And the rivulet that ran before the door;
Think of my little sisters; think of them!
And think of me!—think of my trusting love
And confidence—his vows—my ruin—think, think
Of my unspeakable misery! begone!
Yet stay, yet stay, what was it thou saidst of prayer
And penitence? Didst thou not speak of faith
And vows before the throne?

Monk I did.

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Lalage. 'T is well.

There is a vow were fitting should be made—
A sacred vow, imperative and urgent,
A solemn vow!

Monk Daughter, this zeal is well!

Lalage. Father, this zeal is anything but well!
Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing!

A crucifix whereon to register
This sacred vow? (*He hands her his own*)
Not that—oh, no! no! no! (*shuddering*)
Not that, not that! I tell thee, holy man,
Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me!
Stand back! I have a crucifix myself,
I have a crucifix! Methinks 't were fitting
The deed, the vow, the symbol of the deed,
And the deed's register should tally, father!

(*Draws a cross-handled dagger and raises it on high*)

Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine
Is written in heaven!

Monk Thy words are madness, daughter,
And speak a purpose unholy; thy lips are livid,
Thine eyes are wild; tempt not the wrath divine!
Pause ere too late! oh, be not, be not rash!
Swear not the oath, oh, swear it not!

Lalage. 'T is sworn!"

The coincidences here are too markedly peculiar to

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be gainsaid. The sitting at the table with books, etc., the flowers on the one hand, and the garden on the other, the presence of the pert maid, the reading aloud from the book, the pausing and commenting, the plaintiveness of what is read in accordance with the sorrow of the reader, the abstraction, the frequent calling of the maid by name, the refusal of the maid to answer, the jewels, the "begone", the unseen entrance of a third person from behind, and the drawing of the dagger, are points sufficiently noticeable to establish at least the imitation beyond all doubt.

Let us now compare the concluding lines of Mr. Longfellow's *Autumn* with that of Mr. Bryant's *Thanatopsis*. Mr. B. has it thus:

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

Mr. L. thus:

For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,
Shall have a voice and give him eloquent teachings.
He shall so hear the solemn hymn that Death
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go
To his long resting-place without a tear.

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Again, in his *Prelude to the Voices of the Night* Mr. Longfellow says:

Look then into thine heart and write!

Sir Philip Sidney in the *Astrophel and Stella* has:

Foole, said my Muse to me, looke in thy heart and write!

Again, in Longfellow's *Midnight Mass* we read:

And the hooded clouds, like friars.

The Lady in Milton's *Comus* says:

When the gray-hooded even
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weeds.

And again, these lines by Professor Longfellow will be remembered by everybody:

Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

But if any one will turn to page 66 of John Sharpe's edition of Henry Headley's *Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry*, published at London in 1810, he will there find an *Exequy* on the death of his wife by Henry King, Bishop of Chichester, and therein also the following lines, where the author is speaking of following his wife to the grave:

But hark! my pulse, like a soft drum,
Beats my approach—tells thee I come!
And slow howe'er my marches be,
I shall at last sit down by thee.

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Were I disposed, indeed, to push this subject any further, I should have little difficulty in culling, from the works of the author of *Outre Mer*, a score or two of imitations quite as palpable as any upon which I have insisted. The fact of the matter is, that the friends of Mr. Longfellow, so far from undertaking to talk about my "carping littleness" in charging Mr. Longfellow with imitation, should have given me credit, under the circumstances, for great moderation in charging him with imitation alone. Had I accused him, in loud terms, of manifest and continuous plagiarism, I should but have echoed the sentiment of every man of letters in the land beyond the immediate influence of the Longfellow coterie. And since I, "knowing what I know and seeing what I have seen," submitting in my own person to accusations of plagiarism for the very sins of this gentleman against myself—since I contented myself, nevertheless, with simply setting forth the merits of the poet in the strongest light, whenever an opportunity was afforded me, can it be considered either decorous or equitable on the part of Professor Longfellow to beset me, upon my first adventuring an infinitesimal sentence of dispraise, with ridiculous anonymous letters from his friends, and, moreover, with malice prepense, to instigate against me the pretty little witch entitled "Miss Walter," advising her and instructing her to pierce me to death with the

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needles of innumerable epigrams, rendered unnecessarily and therefore cruelly painful to my feelings by being first carefully deprived of the point ?

It should not be supposed that I feel myself individually aggrieved in the letter of Outis. He has praised me even more than he has blamed. In replying to him, my design has been to place fairly and distinctly before the literary public certain principles of criticism for which I have been long contending, and which, through sheer misrepresentation, were in danger of being misunderstood.

Having brought the subject, in this view, to a close, I now feel at liberty to add a few words, by way of freeing myself of any suspicion of malevolence or discourtesy. The thesis of my argument, in general, has been the definition of the grounds on which a charge of plagiarism may be based, and of the species of ratiocination by which it is to be established: that is all. It will be seen by any one who shall take the trouble to read what I have written, that I make no charge of moral delinquency against either Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Aldrich, or Mr. Hood; indeed, lest in the heat of argument, I may have uttered any words which may admit of being tortured into such interpretation, I here fully disclaim them upon the spot.

In fact, the one strong point of defence for his friends has been unaccountably neglected by Outis. To attempt the rebutting of a charge of plagiarism

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by the broad assertion that no such thing as plagiarism exists, is a sotticism, and no more; but there would have been nothing of unreason in rebutting the charge, as urged either against Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Aldrich, or Mr. Hood, by the proposition that no true poet can be guilty of a meanness; that the converse of this proposition is a contradiction in terms. Should there be found any one willing to dispute with me this point, I would decline the disputation on the ground that my arguments are no arguments to *him*.

It appears to me that what seems to be the gross inconsistency of plagiarism as perpetrated by a poet, is very easily thus resolved: the poetic sentiment (even without reference to the poetic power) implies a peculiarly, perhaps an abnormally, keen appreciation of the beautiful, with a longing for its assimilation, or absorption, into the poetic identity. What the poet intensely admires becomes thus, in very fact, although only partially, a portion of his own intellect. It has a secondary origination within his own soul, an origination altogether apart, although springing from its primary origination from without. The poet is thus possessed by another's thought, and cannot be said to take of it, possession. But, in either view, he thoroughly feels it as his own, and this feeling is counteracted only by the sensible presence of its true, palpable origin in the volume from which he has derived it,—an origin which, in the long lapse of years

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it is almost impossible not to forget, for in the meantime the thought itself is forgotten. But the frailest association will regenerate it; it springs up with all the vigor of a new birth; its absolute originality is not even a matter of suspicion; and when the poet has written it and printed it, and on its account is charged with plagiarism, there will be no one in the world more entirely astounded than himself. Now, from what I have said it will be evident that the liability to accidents of this character is in the direct ratio of the poetic sentiment, of the susceptibility to the poetic impression; and, in fact, all literary history demonstrates that, for the most frequent and palpable plagiarisms, we must search the works of the most eminent poets.





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BIOGRAPHIST of Berryer calls him *l'homme qui, dans sa description demande le plus grande quantité possible d'anti-thèse*, but that ever recurring topic, the decline of the drama, seems to have consumed, of late, more of the material in question than would have sufficed for a dozen prime ministers, even admitting them to be French. Every trick of thought and every harlequinade of phrase have been put in operation for the purpose *de nier ce qui est, et d'expliquer ce qui n'est pas*.

Ce qui n'est pas, for the drama has not declined. The facts and the philosophy of the case seem to be these. The great opponent to progress is conservatism. In other words, the great adversary of invention is imitation: the propositions are in spirit identical. Just as an art is imitative, is it stationary.

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The most imitative arts are the most prone to repose; and the converse. Upon the utilitarian, upon the business arts, where necessity impels, invention, necessity's well-understood offspring, is ever in attendance. And the less we see of the mother the less we behold of the child. No one complains of the decline of the art of engineering. Here the reason, which never retrogrades, or reposes, is called into play. But let us glance at sculpture. We are not worse here than the ancients, let pedantry say what it may (the Venus of Canova is worth, at any time, two of that of Cleomenes), but it is equally certain that we have made, in general, no advances; and sculpture, properly considered, is perhaps the most imitative of all arts which have a right to the title of art at all. Looking next at painting, we find that we have to boast at progress only in the ratio of the inferior imitativeness of painting when compared with sculpture. As far, indeed, as we have any means of judging, our improvement has been exceedingly little, and did we know anything of ancient art, in this department, we might be astonished at discovering that we had advanced even far less than we suppose. As regards architecture, whatever progress we have made has been precisely in those particulars which have no reference to imitation; that is to say, we have improved the utilitarian and not the ornamental provinces of the art. Where reason predominated, we advanced; where

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mere feeling or taste was the guide, we remained as we were.

Coming to the drama, we shall see that in its mechanisms we have made progress, while in its spirituality we have done little or nothing for centuries certainly, and, perhaps, little or nothing for thousands of years. And this is because what we term the spirituality of the drama is precisely its imitative portion, is exactly that portion which distinguishes it as one of the principal of the imitative arts.

Sculptors, painters, dramatists, are, from the very nature of their material, their spiritual material, imitators, conservatists, prone to repose in old feeling and in antique taste. For this reason, and for this reason only, the arts of sculpture, painting, and the drama, have not advanced, or have advanced feebly, and inversely in the ratio of their imitativeness.

But it by no means follows that either has declined. All seem to have declined, because they have remained stationary while the multitudinous other arts (of reason) have flitted so rapidly by them. In the same manner the traveller by railroad can imagine that the trees by the wayside are retrograding. The trees in this case are absolutely stationary, but the drama has not been altogether so, although its progress has been so slight as not to interfere with the general effect, that of seeming retrogradation or decline.

This seeming retrogradation, however, is to all prac-



N. Willis, and the

And now, we the guides, we tell you

of the drama, we shall see that the drama is a more properly imitative art than sculpture or painting for the drama is a picture, like or nothing for the drama is a picture. And this is because what we term the drama is precisely its imitative quality, is that portion which distinguishes it from the other arts of the imitative arts.

Sculptors, painters, dramatists, are, from the very nature of their material, imitative arts, prone to repose in old feeling and old taste. For this reason, and for this reason, the arts of sculpture, painting, and the drama, have not advanced, or have advanced feebly, and the ratio of their imitativeness.

But the drama means feebly that either has declined. All seem to have declined, because they have remained stationary while the multitudinous other arts of reason have fitted so rapidly by them. In the same manner the traveler by railroad can imagine that the trees by the wayside are retrograding. The trees in this case are absolutely stationary, but the drama has not been altogether so, although its progress has been so slight as not to interfere with the general impression, that of seeming retrogradation or decline.

This seeming retrogradation, however, is to all practical



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tical intents an absolute one. Whether the drama has declined, or whether it has merely remained stationary, is a point of no importance, so far as concerns the public encouragement of the drama. It is unsupported, in either case, because it does not deserve support.

But if this stagnation, or deterioration, grows out of the very idiosyncrasy of the drama itself, as one of the principal of the imitative arts, how is it possible that a remedy shall be applied, since it is clearly impossible to alter the nature of the art, and yet leave it the art which it now is ?

We have already spoken of the improvements effected in architecture, in all its utilitarian departments, and in the drama at all the points of its mechanism. "Wherever reason predominates we advance; where mere feeling or taste is the guide, we remain as we are." We wish now to suggest that, by the engrafting of reason upon feeling or taste, we shall be able, and thus alone shall be able, to force the modern drama into the production of any profitable fruit.

At present, what is it we do ? We are content if, with feeling and taste, a dramatist does as other dramatists have done. The most successful of the more immediately modern playwrights has been Sheridan Knowles, and to play Sheridan Knowles seems to be the highest ambition of our writers for

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the stage. Now the author of *The Hunchback* possesses what we are weak enough to term the true "dramatic feeling"; and this true dramatic feeling he has manifested in the most preposterous series of imitations of the Elizabethan drama by which ever mankind were insulted and beguiled. Not only did he adhere to the old plots, the old characters, the old stage conventionalities throughout, but he went even so far as to persist in the obsolete phraseologies of the Elizabethan period, and just in proportion to his obstinacy and absurdity at all points did we pretend to like him the better, and pretend to consider him a good dramatist.

Pretend—for every particle of it was pretence. Never was enthusiasm more utterly false than that which so many "respectable audiences" endeavored to get up for these plays—endeavored to get up, first, because there was a general desire to see the drama revive; and, secondly, because we had been all along entertaining the fancy that "the decline of the drama" meant little, if anything, else than its deviation from the Elizabethan routine, and that, consequently, the return to the Elizabethan routine was, and of necessity must be, the revival of the drama.

But if the principles we have been at some trouble in explaining are true,—and most profoundly do we feel them to be so,—if the spirit of imitation is, in fact, the real source of the drama's stagnation, and if it is so

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because of the tendency in all imitation to render reason subservient to feeling and to taste, it is clear that only by deliberate counteracting of the spirit, and of the tendency of the spirit, we can hope to succeed in the drama's revival.

The first thing necessary is to burn or bury the "old models," and to forget, as quickly as possible, that ever a play has been penned. The second thing is to consider *de novo* what are the capabilities of the drama, not merely what hitherto have been its conventional purposes. The third and last point has reference to the composition of a play (showing to the fullest extent these capabilities) conceived and constructed with feeling and with taste, but with feeling and taste guided and controlled in every particular by the details of reason, of common sense—in a word, of natural art.

It is obvious, in the meantime, that toward the good end in view much may be effected by discriminative criticism on what has already been done. The field, thus stated, is of course practically illimitable, and to Americans the American drama is the special point of interest. We propose, therefore, in a series of papers, to take a somewhat deliberate survey of some few of the most noticeable American plays. We shall do this without reference either to the date of the composition, or its adaptation for the closet or the stage. We shall speak with absolute frankness both of merits

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and defects, our principal object being understood not as that of mere commentary on the individual play, but on the drama in general, and on the American drama in especial, of which each individual play is a constituent part. We will commence at once with

“TORTESA, THE USURER”

This is the third dramatic attempt of Mr. Willis, and may be regarded as particularly successful, since it has received, both on the stage and in the closet, no stinted measure of commendation. This success, as well as the high reputation of the author, will justify us in a more extended notice of the play than might, under other circumstances, be desirable.

The story runs thus: Tortesa, an usurer of Florence, and whose character is a mingled web of good and evil feelings, gets into his possession the palace and lands of a certain Count Falcone. The usurer would wed the daughter (Isabella) of Falcone not through love, but, in his own words,

To please a devil that inhabits him;

in fact, to mortify the pride of the nobility, and avenge himself of their scorn. He therefore bargains with Falcone (a narrow-souled villain) for the hand of Isabella. The deed of the Falcone property is restored to the Count upon an agreement that the lady shall marry the usurer, this contract being invalid should

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Falcone change his mind in regard to the marriage, or should the maiden demur, but valid should the wedding be prevented through any fault of Tortesa, or through any accident not springing from the will of the father or child. The first scene makes us aware of this bargain, and introduces us to Zippa, a glover's daughter, who resolves, with a view of befriending Isabella, to feign a love for Tortesa (which, in fact, she partially feels), hoping thus to break off the match.

The second scene makes us acquainted with a young painter (Angelo), poor, but of high talents and ambition, and with his servant (Tomaso), an old bottle-loving rascal, entertaining no very exalted opinion of his master's abilities. Tomaso does some injury to a picture, and Angelo is about to run him through the body, when he is interrupted by a sudden visit from the Duke of Florence, attended by Falcone. The Duke is enraged at the murderous attempt, but admires the paintings in the studio. Finding that the rage of the great man will prevent his patronage if he knows the aggressor as the artist, Angelo passes off Tomaso as himself (Angelo), making an exchange of names. This is a point of some importance, as it introduces the true Angelo to a job which he had long coveted, the painting of the portrait of Isabella, of whose beauty he had become enamored through report. The Duke wishes the portrait painted. Falcone,

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however, on account of a promise to Tortesa, would have objected to admit to his daughter's presence the handsome Angelo, but in regard to Tomaso has no scruple. Supposing Tomaso to be Angelo and the artist, the Count writes a note to Isabella, requiring her to "admit the painter Angelo." The real Angelo is thus admitted. He and the lady love at first sight (much in the manner of Romeo and Juliet), each ignorant of the other's attachment.

The third scene of the second act is occupied with a conversation between Falcone and Tortesa, during which a letter arrives from the Duke, who, having heard of the intended sacrifice of Isabella, offers to redeem the Count's lands and palace, and desires him to preserve his daughter for a certain Count Julian. But Isabella, who, before seeing Angelo, had been willing to sacrifice herself for her father's sake, and who, since seeing him, had entertained hopes of escaping the hateful match through means of a plot entered into by herself and Zippa,—Isabella, we say, is now in despair. To gain time, she at once feigns a love for the usurer, and indignantly rejects the proposal of the Duke. The hour for the wedding draws near. The lady has prepared a sleeping potion, whose effects resemble those of death (Romeo and Juliet). She swallows it, knowing that her supposed corpse would lie at night, pursuant to an old custom, in the sanctuary of the cathedral; and believing that Angelo, whose love for

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herself she had elicited, by a stratagem, from his own lips, will watch by the body, in the strength of his devotion. Her ultimate design (we may suppose, for it is not told) is to confess all to her lover, on her revival, and throw herself upon his protection, their marriage being concealed, and herself regarded as dead by the world. Zippa, who really loves Angelo—(her love for Tortesa, it must be understood, is a very equivocal feeling, for the fact cannot be denied that Mr. Willis makes her love both at the same time)—Zippa, who really loves Angelo, who has discovered his passion for Isabella, and who, as well as that lady, believes that the painter will watch the corpse in the cathedral, determines, through jealousy, to prevent his so doing, and with this view informs Tortesa that she has learned it to be Angelo's design to steal the body for artistical purposes, in short, as a model to be used in his studio. The usurer, in consequence, sets a guard at the doors of the cathedral. This guard does, in fact, prevent the lover from watching the corpse, but, it appears, does not prevent the lady, on her revival and disappointment in not seeing the one she sought, from passing unperceived from the church. Weakened by her long sleep, she wanders aimlessly through the streets, and at length finds herself, when just sinking with exhaustion, at the door of her father. She has no recourse but to knock. The Count, who here, we must say, acts very much as Thimble of old,—the

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knight, we mean, of the "scolding wife,"—maintains that she is dead, and shuts the door in her face. In other words, he supposes it to be the ghost of his daughter who speaks; and so the lady is left to perish on the steps. Meantime Angelo is absent from home, attempting to get access to the cathedral; and his servant Tomaso takes the opportunity of absenting himself also, and of indulging his bibulous propensities while perambulating the town. He finds Isabella as we left her; and through motives which we will leave Mr. Willis to explain, conducts her unresistingly to Angelo's residence, and—deposits her in Angelo's bed. The artist now returns, Tomaso is kicked out of doors, and we are not told, but left to presume, that a full explanation and perfect understanding are brought about between the lady and her lover.

We find them, next morning, in the studio, where stands, leaning against an easel, the portrait (a full length) of Isabella, with curtains adjusted before it. The stage-directions, moreover, inform us that "the back wall of the room is such as to form a natural ground for the picture." While Angelo is occupied in retouching it, he is interrupted by the arrival of Tortesa with a guard, and is accused of having stolen the corpse from the sanctuary, the lady, meanwhile, having stepped behind the curtain. The usurer insists upon seeing the painting, with a view of ascertaining whether any new touches had been put upon it, which

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would argue an examination, post mortem, of those charms of neck and bosom which the living Isabella would not have unveiled. Resistance is vain, the curtain is torn down; but to the surprise of Angelo, the lady herself is discovered, "with her hands crossed on her breast, and her eyes fixed on the ground, standing motionless in the frame which had contained the picture." The tableau, we are to believe, deceives Tortesa, who steps back to contemplate what he supposes to be the portrait of his betrothed. In the meantime the guards, having searched the house, find the veil which had been thrown over the imagined corpse in the sanctuary; and, upon this evidence, the artist is carried before the Duke. Here he is accused, not only of sacrilege, but of the murder of Isabella, and is about to be condemned to death, when his mistress comes forward in person, thus resigning herself to the usurer to save the life of her lover. But the nobler nature of Tortesa now breaks forth; and, smitten with admiration of the lady's conduct, as well as convinced that her love for himself was feigned, he resigns her to Angelo, although now feeling and acknowledging for the first time that a fervent love has, in his own bosom, assumed the place of this misanthropic ambition which, hitherto, had alone actuated him in seeking her hand. Moreover, he endows Isabella with the lands of her father, Falcone. The lovers are thus made happy. The usurer weds

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Zippa; and the curtain drops upon the promise of the Duke to honor the double nuptials with his presence.

This story, as we have given it, hangs better together (Mr. Willis will pardon our modesty) and is altogether more easily comprehended than in the words of the play itself. We have really put the best face on the matter, and presented the whole in the simplest and clearest light in our power. We mean to say that *Tortesa* (partaking largely, in this respect, of the drama of Cervantes and Calderon) is over-clouded, rendered misty, by a world of unnecessary and impertinent intrigue. This folly was adopted by the Spanish comedy, and is imitated by us with the idea of imparting "action," "business," "vivacity." But vivacity, however desirable, can be attained in many other ways, and is dearly purchased, indeed, when the price is intelligibility.

The truth is that cant has never attained a more owl-like dignity than in the discussion of dramatic principle. A modern stage critic is nothing if not a lofty contemner of all things simple and direct. He delights in mystery, revels in mystification, has transcendental notions concerning P. S. and O. P., and talks about "stage business and stage effect" as if he were discussing the differential calculus. For much of all this we are indebted to the somewhat over-profound criticisms of Augustus William Schlegel.

But the dicta of common sense are of universal

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application, and, touching this matter of intrigue, if, from its superabundance, we are compelled, even in the quiet and critical perusal of a play, to pause frequently and reflect long, to re-read passages over and over again, for the purpose of gathering their bearing upon the whole, of maintaining in our mind a general connection, what but fatigue can result from the exertion? How then when we come to the representation? when these passages, trifling, perhaps, in themselves, but important when considered in relation to the plot, are hurried and blurred over in the stuttering enunciation of some miserable rantipole, or omitted altogether through the constitutional loss of memory so peculiar to those lights of the age and stage, bedight (from being of no conceivable use) supernumeraries? For it must be borne in mind that these bits of intrigue (we use the term in the sense of the German critics) appertain generally, indeed altogether, to the afterthoughts of the drama, to the underplots; are met with, consequently, in the mouth of the lackeys and chamber-maids; and are thus consigned to the tender mercies of the *stellæ minores*. Of course we get but an imperfect idea of what is going on before our eyes. Action after action ensues whose mystery we cannot unlock without the little key which these barbarians have thrown away and lost. Our weariness increases in proportion to the number of these embarrassments, and if the play

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escape damnation at all, it escapes in spite of that intrigue to which, in nine cases out of ten, the author attributes his success, and which he will persist in valuing exactly in proportion to the misapplied labor it has cost him.

But dramas of this kind are said, in our customary parlance, to "abound in plot." We have never yet met any one, however, who could tell us what precise ideas he connected with the phrase. A mere succession of incidents, even the most spirited, will no more constitute a plot than a multiplication of zeros, even the most infinite, will result in the production of a unit. This all will admit; but few trouble themselves to think further. The common notion seems to be in favor of mere complexity; but a plot, properly understood, is perfect only inasmuch as we shall find ourselves unable to detach from it or disarrange any single incident involved, without destruction to the mass. This we say is the point of perfection, a point never yet attained, but not on that account unattainable. Practically, we may consider a plot as of high excellence when no one of its component parts shall be susceptible of removal without detriment to the whole. Here, indeed, is a vast lowering of the demand, and with less than this no writer of refined taste should content himself.

As this subject is not only in itself of great importance, but will have at all points a bearing upon

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what we shall say hereafter, in the examination of various plays, we shall be pardoned for quoting from the *Democratic Review* some passages (of our own) which enter more particularly into the *rationale* of the subject:

“ All the Bridgewater treatises have failed in noticing the great idiosyncrasy in the Divine system of adaptation, that idiosyncrasy which stamps the adaptation as Divine, in distinction from that which is the work of merely human constructiveness. I speak of the complete mutuality of adaptation. For example: In human constructions, a particular cause has a particular effect, a particular purpose brings about a particular object; but we see no reciprocity. The effect does not react upon the cause, the object does not change relations with the purpose. In Divine constructions, the object is either object or purpose as we choose to regard it, while the purpose is either purpose or object; so that we can never (abstractly, without concretion, without reference to facts of the moment) decide which is which.

“ For secondary example: In polar climates, the human frame, to maintain its animal heat, requires, for combustion in the capillary system, an abundant supply of highly azotized food, such as train-oil. Again: In polar climates nearly the sole food afforded man is the oil of abundant seals and whales. Now whether is oil at hand because imperatively demanded,

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or whether is it the only thing demanded because the only thing to be obtained? It is impossible to say; there is an absolute reciprocity of adaptation for which we seek in vain among the works of man.

“The Bridgewater tractists may have avoided this point, on account of its apparent tendency to overthrow the idea of cause in general, consequently of a First Cause, of God. But it is more probable that they have failed to perceive what no one preceding them has, to my knowledge, perceived.

“The pleasure which we derive from any exertion of human ingenuity is in the direct ratio of the approach to this species of reciprocity between cause and effect. In the construction of plot, for example, in fictitious literature, we should aim at so arranging the points, or incidents, that we cannot distinctly see, in respect to any one of them, whether that one depends from any one other or upholds it. In this sense, of course, perfection of plot is unattainable in fact; because man is the constructor. The plots of God are perfect. The universe is a plot of God.”

The pleasure derived from the contemplation of the unity resulting from plot is far more intense than is ordinarily supposed, and, as in nature we meet with no such combination of incident, appertains to a very lofty region of the ideal. In speaking thus we have not said that plot is more than an adjunct to the drama, more than a perfectly distinct and separable

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source of pleasure. It is not an essential. In its intense artificiality it may even be conceived injurious in a certain degree (unless constructed with consummate skill) to that real life-likeness which is the soul of the drama of character. Good dramas have been written with very little plot; capital dramas might be written with none at all. Some plays of high merit, having plot, abound in irrelevant incident,—in incident, we mean, which could be displaced or removed altogether without effect upon the plot itself, and yet are by no means objectionable as dramas; and for this reason, that the incidents are evidently irrelevant, obviously episodic. Of their digressive nature the spectator is so immediately aware that he views them, as they arise, in the simple light of interlude, and does not fatigue his attention by attempting to establish for them a connection, or more than an illustrative connection, with the great interests of the subject. Such are the plays of Shakespeare. But all this is very different from that irrelevancy of intrigue which disfigures and very usually damns the work of the unskilful artist. With him the great error lies in inconsequence. Underplot is piled upon underplot (the very word is a paradox), and all to no purpose, to no end. The interposed incidents have no ultimate effect upon the main ones. They may hang upon the mass, they may even coalesce with it, or, as in some intricate cases, they may be so intimately blended as to be lost

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amid the chaos which they have been instrumental in bringing about; but still they have no portion in the plot, which exists, if at all, independently of their influence. Yet the attempt is made by the author to establish and demonstrate a dependence, an identity; and it is the obviousness of this attempt which is the cause of weariness in the spectator, who, of course, cannot at once see that his attention is challenged to no purpose, that intrigues so obtrusively forced upon it are to be found, in the end, without effect upon the leading interests of the play.

Tortesa will afford us plentiful examples of this irrelevancy of intrigue, of this misconception of the nature and of the capacities of plot. We have said that our digest of the story is more easy of comprehension than the detail of Mr. Willis. If so, it is because we have forborne to give such portions as had no influence upon the whole. These served but to embarrass the narrative and fatigue the attention. How much was irrelevant is shown by the brevity of the space in which we have recorded, somewhat at length, all the influential incidents of a drama of five acts. There is scarcely a scene in which is not to be found the germ of an underplot,—a germ, however, which seldom proceeds beyond the condition of a bud, or, if so fortunate as to swell into a flower, arrives, in no single instance, at the dignity of fruit. Zippa, a lady altogether without character (dramatic),

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is the most pertinacious of all conceivable concocters of plans never to be matured, of vast designs that terminate in nothing, of *cul-de-sac* machinations. She plots in one page and counterplots in the next. She schemes her way from P. S. to O. P., and intrigues perseveringly from the footlights to the slips. A very singular instance of the inconsequence of her manœuvres is found toward the conclusion of the play. The whole of the second scene (occupying five pages) in the fifth act, is obviously introduced for the purpose of giving her information, through Tomaso's means, of Angelo's arrest for the murder of Isabella. Upon learning his danger she rushes from the stage to be present at the trial, exclaiming that her evidence can save his life. We, the audience, of course applaud, and now look with interest to her movements in the scene of the judgment hall. She, Zippa, we think, is somebody after all; she will be the means of Angelo's salvation; she will thus be the chief unraveller of the plot. All eyes are bent, therefore, upon Zippa; but alas! upon the point at issue Zippa does not so much as open her mouth. It is scarcely too much to say that not a single action of this impertinent little busybody has any real influence upon the play; yet she appears upon every occasion, appearing only to perplex.

Similar things abound; we should not have space even to allude to them all. The whole conclusion of

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the play is supererogatory. The immensity of pure fuss with which it is overloaded forces us to the reflection that all of it might have been avoided by one word of explanation to the Duke, an amiable man who admires the talents of Angelo, and who, to prevent Isabella's marrying against her will, had previously offered to free Falcone of his bonds to the usurer. That he would free him now, and thus set all matters straight, the spectator cannot doubt for an instant, and he can conceive no better reason why explanations are not made than that Mr. Willis does not think proper they should be. In fact, the whole drama is exceedingly ill *motivée*.

We have already mentioned an inadvertence, in the fourth act, where Isabella is made to escape from the sanctuary through the midst of guards who prevented the ingress of Angelo. Another occurs where Falcone's conscience is made to reprove him, upon the appearance of his daughter's supposed ghost, for having occasioned her death by forcing her to marry against her will. The author had forgotten that Falcone submitted to the wedding, after the Duke's interposition, only upon Isabella's assurance that she really loved the usurer. In the third scene, too, of the first act, the imagination of the spectator is no doubt a little taxed, when he finds Angelo, in the first moment of his introduction to the palace of Isabella, commencing her portrait by laying on color

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after color, before he has made any attempt at an outline. In the last act, moreover, Tortesa gives to Isabella a deed

Of the Falcone palaces and lands,
And all the money forfeit by Falcone.

This is a terrible blunder, and the more important as upon this act of the usurer depends the development of his new-born sentiments of honor and virtue—depends, in fact, the most salient point of the play. Tortesa, we say, gives to Isabella the lands forfeited by Falcone; but Tortesa was surely not very generous in giving what, clearly, was not his own to give. Falcone had not forfeited the deed, which had been restored to him by the usurer, and which was then in his (Falcone's) possession. Hear Tortesa:

He put it in the bond,
That if, by any humor of my own,
Or accident that came not from himself,
Or from his daughter's will, the match were marred,
His tenure stood intact.

Now Falcone is still resolute for the match; but this new, generous "humor" of Tortesa induces him (Tortesa) to decline it. Falcone's tenure is then intact; he retains the deed, the usurer is giving away property not his own.

As a drama of character *Tortesa* is by no means open to so many objections as when we view it in the light of its plot; but it is still faulty. The merits

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are so exceedingly negative that it is difficult to say anything about them. The Duke is nobody; Falcone, nothing; Zippa, less than nothing. Angelo may be regarded simply as the medium through which Mr. Willis conveys to the reader his own glowing feelings, his own refined and delicate fancy (delicate, yet bold), his own rich voluptuousness of sentiment, a voluptuousness which would offend in almost any other language than that in which it is so skilfully apparelled. Isabella is—the heroine of *The Hunchback*. The revolution in the character of Tortesa, or rather the final triumph of his innate virtue, is a dramatic point far older than the hills. It may be observed, too, that although the representation of no human character should be quarrelled with for its inconsistency, we yet require that the inconsistencies be not absolute antagonisms to the extent of neutralization; they may be permitted to be oils and waters, but they must not be alkalies and acids. When, in the course of the *dénouement*, the usurer burst forth into an eloquence virtue-inspired, we cannot sympathize very heartily in his fine speeches, since they proceed from the mouth of the selfsame egotist who, urged by a disgusting vanity, uttered so many sotticisms (about his fine legs, etc.) in the earlier passages of the play. Tomaso is, upon the whole, the best personage. We recognize some originality in his conception, and conception was seldom more admirably carried out.

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One or two observations at random. In the third scene of the fifth act, Tomaso, the buffoon, is made to assume paternal authority over Isabella (as usual, without sufficient purpose) by virtue of a law which Tortesa thus expounds:

My gracious liege, there is a law in Florence,
That if a father, for no guilt or shame,
Disown and shut his door upon his daughter,
She is the child of him who succors her,
Who by the shelter of a single night
Becomes endowed with the authority
Lost by the other.

No one, of course, can be made to believe that any such stupid law as this ever existed either in Florence or Timbuctoo; but, on the ground *que le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable*, we say that even its real existence would be no justification of Mr. Willis. It has an air of the far-fetched, of the desperate, which a fine taste will avoid as a pestilence. Very much of the same nature is the attempt of Tortesa to extort a second bond from Falcone. The evidence which convicts Angelo of murder is ridiculously frail. The idea of Isabella's assuming the place of the portrait, and so deceiving the usurer, is not only glaringly improbable, but seems adopted from the *Winter's Tale*. But in this latter play the deception is at least possible, for the human figure but imitates a statue. What, however, are we to make of Mr. W.'s stage

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direction about the back walls being "so arranged as to form a natural ground for the picture"? Of course, the very slightest movement of *Tortesa* (and he makes many) would have annihilated the illusion by disarranging the perspective; and in no manner could this latter have been arranged at all for more than one particular point of view; in other words, for more than one particular person in the whole audience. The "asides," moreover, are unjustifiably frequent. The prevalence of this folly (of speaking aside) detracts as much from the acting merit of our drama generally as any other inartisticity. It utterly destroys verisimilitude. People are not in the habit of soliloquizing aloud—at least, not to any positive extent; and why should an author have to be told, what the slightest reflection would teach him, that an audience, by dint of no imagination, can or will conceive that what is sonorous in their own ears at the distance of fifty feet cannot be heard by an actor at the distance of one or two?

Having spoken thus of *Tortesa* in terms of nearly unmitigated censure, our readers may be surprised to hear us say that we think highly of the drama as a whole, and have little hesitation in ranking it before most of the dramas of Sheridan Knowles. Its leading faults are those of the modern drama generally; they are not peculiar to itself, while its great merits are. If in support of our opinions we do not cite

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points of commendation, it is because these form the mass of the work. And were we to speak of fine passages, we should speak of the entire play. Nor by "fine passages" do we mean passages of merely fine language, embodying fine sentiment, but such as are replete with truthfulness, and teem with the loftiest qualities of the dramatic art. Points, capital points abound; and these have far more to do with the general excellence of a play than a too speculative criticism has been willing to admit. Upon the whole, we are proud of *Tortosa*, and here again, for the fiftieth time at least, record our warm admiration of the abilities of Mr. Willis.

We proceed now to Mr. Longfellow's

"SPANISH STUDENT"

The reputation of its author as a poet, and as a graceful writer of prose, is, of course, long and deservedly established, but as a dramatist he was unknown before the publication of this play. Upon its original appearance, in *Graham's Magazine*, the general opinion was greatly in favor, if not exactly of *The Spanish Student*, at all events of the writer of *Outre-Mer*. But this general opinion is the most equivocal thing in the world. It is never self-formed. It has very seldom indeed an original development. In regard to the work of an already famous or infamous author it decides, to be sure, with a laudable

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promptitude, making up all the mind that it has, by reference to the reception of the author's immediately previous publication; making up thus the ghost of a mind *pro tem*, a species of critical shadow, that fully answers, nevertheless, all the purposes of a substance itself, until the substance itself shall be forthcoming. But, beyond this point, the general opinion can only be considered that of the public, as a man may call a book his, having bought it. When a new writer arises, the shop of the true, thoughtful, or critical opinion is not simultaneously thrown away, is not immediately set up. Some weeks elapse; and, during this interval, the public, at a loss where to procure an opinion of the *débutante*, have necessarily no opinion of him at all, for the nonce.

The popular voice, then, which ran so much in favor of *The Spanish Student*, upon its original issue, should be looked upon as merely the ghost *pro tem*, as based upon critical decisions respecting the previous works of the author, as having reference in no manner to *The Spanish Student* itself, and thus as utterly meaningless and valueless *per se*.

The few, by which we mean those who think, in contradistinction from the many who think they think, the few who think at first hand, and thus twice before speaking at all,—these received the play with a commendation somewhat less *prononcée*, somewhat

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more guardedly qualified, than Professor Longfellow might have desired, or may have been taught to expect. Still the composition was approved upon the whole. The few words of censure were very far, indeed, from amounting to condemnation. The chief defect insisted upon was the feebleness of the *dénouement*, and, generally, of the concluding scenes, as compared with the opening passages. We are not sure, however, that anything like detailed criticism has been attempted in the case, nor do we propose now to attempt it. Nevertheless, the work has interest, not only within itself, but as the first dramatic effort of an author who has remarkably succeeded in almost every other department of light literature than that of the drama. It may be as well, therefore, to speak of it, if not analytically, at least somewhat in detail; and we cannot, perhaps, more suitably commence than by a quotation, without comment, of some of the finer passages:

And, though she is a virgin outwardly,
Within she is a sinner; like those panels
Of doors and altar-pieces the old monks
Painted in convents, with the Virgin Mary
On the outside, and on the inside Venus!

I believe
That woman, in her deepest degradation,
Holds something sacred, something undefiled,
Some pledge and keepsake of her higher nature,

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And, like the diamond in the dark, retains
Some quenchless gleam of the celestial light!

And we shall sit together unmolested,
And words of true love pass from tongue to tongue,
As singing birds from one bough to another.

Our feelings and our thoughts
Tend ever on and rest not in the Present.
As drops of rain fall into some dark well,
And from below comes a scarce audible sound,
So fall our thoughts into the dark Hereafter,
And their mysterious echo reaches us.

Her tender limbs are still, and on her breast
The cross she prayed to, ere she fell asleep,
Rises or falls with the soft tide of dreams,
Like a light barge safe-moored.

Hark! how the large and ponderous mace of Time
Knocks at the golden portals of the day!

The lady Violante, bathed in tears
Of love and anger, like the maid of Colchis,
Whom thou, another faithless Argonaut,
Having won that golden fleece, a woman's love,
Desertest for this Glauco.

I read, or sit in revery and watch
The changing color of the waves that break
Upon the idle sea-shore of the mind.

I will forget her. All dear recollections
Pressed in my heart, like flowers within a book,
Shall be torn out and scattered to the winds.

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O yes! I see it now,
Yet rather with my heart than with mine eyes,
So faint it is. And all my thoughts sail thither,
Freighted with prayers and hopes, and forward urged
Against all stress of accident, as, in
The Eastern Tale, against the wind and tide
Great ships were drawn to the Magnetic Mountains.

But there are brighter dreams than those of Fame,
Which are the dreams of Love! Out of the heart
Rises the bright ideal of these dreams,
As from some woodland fount a spirit rises
And sinks again into its silent deeps,
Ere the enamored knight can touch her robe!
'T is this ideal that the soul of Man,
Like the enamored knight beside the fountain,
Waits for upon the margin of Life's stream;
Waits to behold her rise from the dark waters,
Clad in a mortal shape! Alas, how many
Must wait in vain! The stream flows evermore,
But from its silent deeps no spirit rises!
Yet I, born under a propitious star,
Have found the bright ideal of my dreams.

Yes; by the Darro's side
My childhood passed. I can remember still
The river, and the mountains capped with snow;
The villages where, yet a little child,
I told the traveller's fortune in the street;
The smuggler's horse, the brigand and the shepherd;
The march across the moor; the halt at noon;
The red fire of the evening camp, that lighted
The forest where we slept; and, further back,

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As in a dream, or in some former life,
Gardens and palace walls.

This path will lead us to it,
Over the wheat-fields, where the shadows sail
Across the running sea, now green, now blue,
And, like an idle mariner on the ocean,
Whistles the quail.

These extracts will be universally admired. They are graceful, well expressed, imaginative, and altogether replete with the true poetic feeling. We quote them now, at the beginning of our review, by way of justice to the poet, and because, in what follows, we are not sure that we have more than a very few words of what may be termed commendation to bestow.

The Spanish Student has an unfortunate beginning, in a most unpardonable, and yet, to render the matter worse, in a most indispensable, "Preface":

"The subject of the following play [says Mr. L.] is taken in part from the beautiful play of Cervantes, *La Gitanilla*. To this source, however, I am indebted for the main incident only, the love of a Spanish student for a gypsy girl, and the name of the heroine, Preciosa. I have not followed the story in any of its details. In Spain this subject has been twice handled dramatically: first by Juan Perez de Montalvan, in *La Gitanilla*, and afterward by Antonio de Solis y Rivadeneira in *La Gitanilla de Madrid*. The same subject has also been

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made use of by Thomas Middleton, an English dramatist of the seventeenth century. His play is called *The Spanish Gypsy*. The main plot is the same as in the Spanish pieces; but there runs through it a tragic underplot of the loves of Rodrigo and Doña Clara, which is taken from another tale of Cervantes, *La Fuerza de la Sangre*. The reader who is acquainted with *La Gitanilla* of Cervantes, and the plays of Montalvan, Solis, and Middleton, will perceive that my treatment of the subject differs entirely from theirs."

Now the authorial originality, properly considered, is threefold. There is, first, the originality of the general thesis; secondly, that of the several incidents, or thoughts, by which the thesis is developed; and, thirdly, that of manner, or tone, by which means alone an old subject, even when developed through hackneyed incidents, or thoughts, may be made to produce a fully original effect, which, after all, is the end truly in view.

But originality, as it is one of the highest, is also one of the rarest, of merits. In America it is especially, and very remarkably, rare;—this through causes sufficiently well understood. We are content perforce, therefore, as a general thing, with either of the lower branches of originality mentioned above, and would regard with high favor, indeed, any author

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who should supply the great desideratum in combining the three. Still the three should be combined; and from whom, if not from such men as Professor Longfellow, if not from those who occupy the chief niches in our Literary Temple, shall we expect the combination? But in the present instance, what has Professor Longfellow accomplished? Is he original at any one point? Is he original in respect to the first and most important of our three divisions? "The *subject* of the following play," he says himself, "is taken *in part* from the beautiful play of Cervantes, *La Gitanilla*. To this source, however, I am indebted for *the main incident only*, the love of a Spanish student for a gypsy girl, and the name of the heroine, Preciosa."

The italics are our own, and the words italicized involve an obvious contradiction. We cannot understand how "the love of the Spanish student for the gypsy girl" can be called an "incident," or even a "main incident," at all. In fact, this love, this discordant and therefore eventful or incidental love, is the true thesis of the drama of Cervantes. It is this anomalous "love" which originates the incidents by means of which, itself, this "love," the thesis, is developed. Having based his play, then, upon this "love," we cannot admit his claim to originality upon our first count; nor has he any right to say that he has adopted his "subject" "in part." It is clear

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that he has adopted it altogether. Nor would he have been entitled to claim originality of subject, even had he based his story upon any variety of love arising between parties naturally separated by prejudices of caste, such, for example, as those which divide the Brahmin from the Pariah, the Ammonite from the African, or even the Christian from the Jew. For here, in its ultimate analysis, is the real thesis of the Spaniard. But when the drama is founded, not merely upon this general thesis, but upon this general thesis in the identical application given it by Cervantes, that is to say, upon the prejudice of caste exemplified in the case of a Catholic, and this Catholic a Spaniard, and this Spaniard a student, and this student loving a gypsy, and this gypsy a dancing-girl, and this dancing-girl bearing the name Preciosa, we are not altogether prepared to be informed by Professor Longfellow that he is indebted for an "incident only" to the "beautiful *Gitanilla* of Cervantes."

Whether our author is original upon our second and third points, in the true incidents of his story, or in the manner and tone of their handling, will be more distinctly seen as we proceed.

It is to be regretted that *The Spanish Student* was not sub-entitled "A Dramatic Poem," rather than "A Play." The former title would have more fully conveyed the intention of the poet; for, of course, we

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shall not do Mr. Longfellow the injustice to suppose that his design has been, in any respect, a play, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Whatever may be its merits in a merely poetical view, *The Spanish Student* could not be endured upon the stage.

Its plot runs thus: Preciosa, the daughter of a Spanish gentleman, is stolen, while an infant, by gypsies; brought up as his own daughter, and as a dancing-girl, by a gypsy leader, Cruzado; and by him betrothed to a young gypsy, Bartolomé. At Madrid Preciosa loves and is beloved by Victorian, a student of Alcalá, who resolves to marry her, notwithstanding her caste, rumors involving her purity, the dissuasions of his friends, and his betrothal to an heiress of Madrid. Preciosa is also sought by the Count of Lara, a *roué*. She rejects him. He forces his way into her chamber, and is there seen by Victorian, who, misinterpreting some words overheard, doubts the fidelity of his mistress, and leaves her in anger, after challenging the Count of Lara. In the duel, the Count receives his life at the hands of Victorian; declares his ignorance of the understanding between Victorian and Preciosa; boasts of favors received from the latter; and, to make good his words, produces a ring which she gave him, he asserts, as a pledge of her love. This ring is a duplicate of one previously given the girl by Victorian, and known to have been so given by the Count. Victorian mistakes

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it for his own, believes all that has been said, and abandons the field to his rival, who, immediately afterward, while attempting to procure access to the gypsy, is assassinated by Bartolomé. Meanwhile, Victorian, wandering through the country, reaches Guadarrama. Here he receives a letter from Madrid, disclosing the treachery practised by Lara, and telling that Preciosa, rejecting his addresses, had been, through his instrumentality, hissed from the stage, and now again roamed with the gypsies. He goes in search of her; finds her in a wood near Guadarrama; approaches her, disguising his voice; she recognizes him, pretending she does not, and unaware that he knows her innocence; a conversation of *équivoque* ensues; he sees his ring upon her finger; offers to purchase it; she refuses to part with it; a full *éclaircissement* takes place; at this juncture, a servant of Victorian's arrives with "news from Court," giving the first intimation of the true parentage of Preciosa. The lovers set out, forthwith, for Madrid to see the newly discovered father. On the route Bartolomé dogs their steps; fires at Preciosa; misses her; the shot is returned; he falls; and *The Spanish Student* is concluded.

This plot, however, like that of *Tortosa* looks better in our naked digest than amidst the details which develop only to disfigure it. The reader of the play itself will be astonished, when he remembers the name of the author, at the inconsequence of the

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incidents, at the utter want of skill, of art, manifested in their conception and introduction. In dramatic writing, no principle is more clear than that nothing should be said or done which has not a tendency to develop the catastrophe, or the characters. But Mr. Longfellow's play abounds in events and conversations that have no ostensible purpose, and certainly answer no end. In what light, for example, since we cannot suppose this drama intended for the stage, are we to regard the second scene of the second act, where a long dialogue between an archbishop and a cardinal is wound up by a dance from *Preciosa*? The Pope thinks of abolishing public dances in Spain, and the priests in question have been delegated to examine, personally, the proprieties or improprieties of such exhibitions. With this view, *Preciosa* is summoned and required to give a specimen of her skill. Now this, in a mere spectacle, would do very well; for here all that is demanded is an occasion or an excuse for a dance; but what business has it in a pure drama? or in what regard does it further the end of a dramatic poem intended only to be read? In the same manner, the whole of scene the eighth, in the same act, is occupied with six lines of stage directions as follows:

“The Theatre. The orchestra plays the cachuca.
Sound of castanets behind the scenes. The curtain

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rises, and discovers Preciosa in the attitude of commencing the dance. The cachuca. Tumult; hisses; cries of 'Brava!' and 'Afuera!' She falters and pauses. The music stops. General confusion. Preciosa faints."

But the inconsequence of which we complain will be best exemplified by an entire scene. We take scene the fourth, act the first:

"An inn on the road to Alcalá. Baltasar asleep on a bench. Enter Chispa.

Chispa. And here we are, half-way to Alcalá, between cocks and midnight. Body o' me! what an inn is this! The light out and the landlord asleep! Holá! ancient Baltasar!

Baltasar (waking). Here I am.

Chispa. Yes, there you are, like a one-eyed Alcalde in a town without inhabitants. Bring a light, and let me have supper.

Baltasar. Where is your master?

Chispa. Do not trouble yourself about him. We have stopped a moment to breathe our horses; and if he chooses to walk up and down in the open air, looking into the sky as one who hears it rain, that does not satisfy my hunger, you know. But be quick, for I am in a hurry, and every man stretches his legs according to the length of his coverlet. What have we here?

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Baltasar (setting a light on the table). Stewed rabbit.

Chispa (eating). Conscience of Portalegre! stewed kitten, you mean!

Baltasar. And a pitcher of Pedro Ximenes, with a roasted pear in it.

Chispa (drinking) Ancient Baltasar, *amigo!* You know how to cry wine and sell vinegar. I tell you this is nothing but *Vino Tinto* of La Mancha, with a tang of the swine-skin.

Baltasar. I swear to you by Saint Simon and Judas, it is all as I say.

Chispa. And I swear to you by Saint Peter and Saint Paul, that it is no such thing. Moreover, your supper is like the hidalgo's dinner, very little meat, and a great deal of table-cloth.

Baltasar. Ha! ha! ha!

Chispa. And more noise than nuts.

Baltasar. Ha! ha! ha! You must make your joke, Master Chispa. But shall I not ask Don Victorian in to take a draught of the Pedro Ximenes?

Chispa. No; you might as well say, 'Don't you want some?' to a dead man.

Baltasar. Why does he go so often to Madrid?

Chispa. For the same reason that he eats no supper. He is in love. Were you ever in love, Baltasar?

Baltasar. I was never out of it, good Chispa. It has been the torment of my life.

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Chispa. What! are you on fire, too, old haystack? Why, we shall never be able to put you out.

Victorian (without). Chispa!

Chispa. Go to bed, Pero Grullo, for the cocks are crowing.

Victorian. Ea! Chispa! Chispa!

Chispa. Ea! Señor. Come with me, ancient Baltasar, and bring water for the horses. I will pay for the supper to-morrow. [*Exeunt.*]"

Now here the question occurs, What is accomplished? How has the subject been forwarded? We did not need to learn that Victorian was in love, that was known before; and all that we glean is that a stupid imitation of Sancho Panza drinks, in the course of two minutes (the time occupied in the perusal of the scene), a bottle of *Vino Tinto*, by way of Pedro Ximenes, and devours a stewed kitten in place of a rabbit.

In the beginning of the play this Chispa is the valet of Victorian; subsequently we find him the servant of another; and near the *dénouement* he returns to his original master. No cause is assigned, and not even the shadow of an object is attained; the whole tergiversation being but another instance of the gross inconsequence which abounds in the play.

The author's deficiency of skill is especially evinced in the scene of the *éclaircissement* between Victorian

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and Preciosa. The former having been enlightened respecting the true character of the latter, by means of a letter received at Guadarrama, from a friend at Madrid (how wofully inartistical is this!), resolves to go in search of her forthwith, and forthwith, also, discovers her in a wood close at hand. Whereupon he approaches, disguising his voice; yes, we are required to believe that a lover may so disguise his voice from his mistress as even to render his person in full view irrecognizable! He approaches, and, each knowing the other, a conversation ensues under the hypothesis that each to the other is unknown—a very unoriginal and, of course, a very silly source of *équivogue*, fit only for the gum-elastic imagination of an infant. But what we especially complain of here, is that our poet should have taken so many and so obvious pains to bring about this position of *équivogue*, when it was impossible that it could have served any other purpose than that of injuring his intended effect! Read, for example, this passage:

Victorian. I never loved a maid;
For she I loved was then a maid no more.

Preciosa. How know you that?

Victorian. A little bird in the air
Whispered the secret.

Preciosa. There, take back your gold!
Your hand is cold like a deceiver's hand!

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There is no blessing in its charity!
Make her your wife, for you have been abused;
And you shall mend your fortunes mending hers.

Victorian. How like an angel's speaks the tongue
of woman,
When pleading in another's cause her own!"

Now, here it is clear that if we understood Preciosa to be really ignorant of Victorian's identity, the "pleading in another's cause her own" would create a favorable impression upon the reader, or spectator. But the advice, "Make her your wife," etc., takes an interested and selfish turn when we remember that she knows to whom she speaks.

Again, when Victorian says:

"That is a pretty ring upon your finger,
Pray give it me!"

And when she replies,

"No, never from my hand
Shall that be taken,"

we are inclined to think her only an artful coquette, knowing, as we do, the extent of her knowledge; on the other hand, we should have applauded her constancy (as the author intended) had she been represented ignorant of Victorian's presence. The effect upon the audience, in a word, would be pleasant in

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place of disagreeable were the case altered as we suggest, while the effect upon Victorian would remain altogether untouched.

A still more remarkable instance of deficiency in the dramatic tact is to be found in the mode of bringing about the discovery of Preciosa's parentage. In the very moment of the *éclaircissement* between the lovers, Chispa arrives almost as a matter of course, and settles the point in a sentence:

"Good news from Court! Good news! Beltran Cruzado,
The Count of the Calés is not your father,
But your true father has returned to Spain
Laden with wealth. You are no more a gypsy."

Now here are three points: first, the extreme baldness, platitude, and independence of the incident narrated by Chispa. The opportune return of the father (we are tempted to say the excessively opportune) stands by itself, has no relation to any other event in the play, does not appear to arise, in the way of result, from any incident or incidents that have arisen before. It has the air of a happy chance, of a Godsend, of an ultra-accident, invented by the playwright by way of compromise for his lack of invention. *Nec Deus interit*, etc., but here the god has interposed, and the knot is laughably unworthy of the god.

The second point concerns the return of the father

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"laden with wealth." The lover has abandoned his mistress in her poverty, and, while yet the words of his proffered reconciliation hang upon his lips, comes his own servant with the news that the mistress's father has returned "laden with wealth." Now, so far as regards the audience, who are behind the scenes and know the fidelity of the lover—so far as regards the audience, all is right; but the poet had no business to place his heroine in the sad predicament of being forced, provided she is not a fool, to suspect both the ignorance and the disinterestedness of the hero.

The third point has reference to the words, "You are now no more a gypsy." The thesis of this drama, as we have already said, is love disregarding the prejudices of caste, and in the development of this thesis, the powers of the dramatist have been engaged, or should have been engaged, during the whole of the three acts of the play. The interest excited lies in our admiration of the sacrifice, and of the love that could make it; but this interest immediately and disagreeably subsides when we find that the sacrifice has been made to no purpose. "You are no more a gypsy" dissolves the charm, and obliterates the whole impression which the author has been at so much labor to convey. Our romantic sense of the hero's chivalry declines into a complacent satisfaction with his fate. We drop our enthusiasm, with the enthusiast, and

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jovially shake by the hand the mere man of good luck. But is not the latter feeling the more comfortable of the two ? Perhaps so ; but " comfortable " is not exactly the word Mr. Longfellow might wish applied to the end of his drama, and then why be at the trouble of building up an effect through a hundred and eighty pages, merely to knock it down at the end of the hundred and eighty-first ?

We have already given at some length our conceptions of the nature of plot, and of that of *The Spanish Student*, it seems almost superfluous to speak at all. It has nothing of construction about it. Indeed there is scarcely a single incident which has any necessary dependence upon any one other. Not only might we take away two thirds of the whole without ruin, but without detriment, indeed, with a positive benefit to the mass. And, even as regards the mere order of arrangement, we might with a very decided chance of improvement, put the scenes in a bag, give them a shake or two by way of shuffle, and tumble them out. The whole mode of collocation, not to speak of the feebleness of the incidents in themselves, evinces, on the part of the author, an utter and radical want of the adapting or constructive power which the drama so imperatively demands.

Of the unoriginality of the thesis we have already spoken ; and now, to the unoriginality of the events by which the thesis is developed, we need do little

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more than allude. What, indeed, could we say of such incidents as the child stolen by gypsies, as her education as a *danseuse*, as her betrothal to a gypsy, as her preference for a gentleman, as the rumors against her purity, as her persecution by a *roué*, as the intrusion of the *roué* into her chamber, as the consequent misunderstanding between her and her lover, as the duel, as the defeat of the *roué*, as the receipt of his life from the hero, as his boasts of success with the girl, as the ruse of the duplicate ring, as the field, in consequence, abandoned by the lover, as the assassination of Lara while scaling the girl's bedchamber, as the disconsolate peregrination of Victorian, as the *équivoque* scene with Preciosa, as the offering to purchase the ring and the refusal to part with it, as the "news from Court" telling of the gypsy's true parentage,—what could we say of all these ridiculous things, except that we have met them, each and all, some two or three hundred times before, and that they have formed, in a greater or less degree, the staple material of every Hop-o'-My-Thumb tragedy since the Flood? There is not an incident, from the first page of *The Spanish Student* to the last and most satisfactory, which we would not undertake to find bodily, at ten minutes' notice, in some one of the thousand and one comedies of intrigue attributed to Calderon and Lope de Vega.

But if our poet is grossly unoriginal in his subject,

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and in the events which evolve it, may he not be original in his handling or tone? We really grieve to say that he is not, unless, indeed, we grant him the meed of originality for the peculiar manner in which he has jumbled together the quaint and stilted tone of the old English dramatists with the *dégagée* air of Cervantes. But this is a point upon which, through want of space, we must necessarily permit the reader to judge altogether for himself. We quote, however, a passage from the second scene of the first act, by way of showing how very easy a matter it is to make a man discourse Sancho Panza:

"Chispa. Abernuncio Satanas! and a plague upon all lovers who ramble about at night, drinking the elements, instead of sleeping quietly in their beds. Every dead man to his cemetery, say I; and every friar to his monastery. Now, here 's my master Victorian, yesterday a cow-keeper and to-day a gentleman; yesterday a student and to-day a lover; and I must be up later than the nightingale, for as the abbot sings so must the sacristan respond. God grant he may soon be married, for then shall all this serenading cease. Ay, marry, marry marry! Mother, what does marry mean? It means to spin, to bear children, and to weep, my daughter! And, of a truth, there is something more in matrimony than the wedding-ring. And now, gentlemen, *Pax vobiscum*! as the ass said to the cabbages."

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And, we might add, as an ass only should say.

In fact, throughout *The Spanish Student*, as well as throughout other compositions of its author, there runs a very obvious vein of imitation. We are perpetually reminded of something we have seen before, some old acquaintance in manner or matter; and even where the similarity cannot be said to amount to plagiarism, it is still injurious to the poet in the good opinion of him who reads.

Among the minor defects of the play, we may mention the frequent allusion to book incidents not generally known, and requiring each a note by way of explanation. The drama demands that everything be so instantaneously evident that he who runs may read; and the only impression effected by these notes to a play is, that the author is desirous of showing his reading.

We may mention, also, occasional tautologies; such as,

Never did I behold thee so *attired*
And *garmented* in beauty as to-night!

Or,

What we need
Is the celestial fire to change the flint
Into *transparent* crystal, *bright and clear*!

We may speak, too, of more than occasional errors of grammar. For example, page 23:

Did no one see thee? None, my love, but *thou*.

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Here, "but" is not a conjunction, but a preposition, and governs "thee" in the objective. "None but *thee*" would be right; meaning none except thee, *saving* thee. At page 27, "mayst" is somewhat incorrectly written "may'st." At page 34 we have:

I have no other saint than *thou* to pray to.

Here, authority and analogy are both against Mr. Longfellow. "Than" also is here a preposition governing the objective, and meaning "save" or "except." "I have none other God than thee," etc. See Horne Tooke. The Latin *quam te* is exactly equivalent. At page 80 we read:

Like thee I am a captive, and *like thee*,
I have a gentle gaoler.

Here, "like thee" (although grammatical, of course) does not convey the idea. Mr. L. does not mean that the speaker is like the bird itself, but that his condition resembles it. The true reading would be thus:

As thou I am a captive, and, *as thou*,
I have a gentle gaoler.

That is to say, *as thou art*, and *as thou hast*.

Upon the whole, we regret that Professor Longfellow has written this work, and feel especially vexed that he has committed himself by its republication. Only when regarded as a mere poem, can it be said to have merit of any kind. For, in fact, it is only when we

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separate the poem from the drama, that the passages we have commended as beautiful can be understood to have beauty. We are not too sure, indeed, that a "dramatic poem" is not a flat contradiction in terms. At all events a man of true genius (and such Mr. L. unquestionably is) has no business with these hybrid and paradoxical compositions. Let a poem be a poem only; let a play be a play and nothing more. As for *The Spanish Student*, its thesis is unoriginal, its incidents are antique, its plot is no plot, its characters have no character; in short, it is little better than a play upon words, to style it "A Play" at all.





Elizabeth Oakes Smith¹

THIS is a very pretty little volume, neatly printed, handsomely bound, embracing some two hundred pages sixteenmo, and introduced to the public, somewhat unnecessarily, in a preface by Dr. Rufus W. Griswold. In this preface we find some few memoranda of the personal authoress, with some critical opinions in relation to her poems. The memoranda are meagre. A much more interesting account of Mrs. Smith is given by Mr. John Neal, and was included by Mr. John Keese in the introduction to a former collection of her works. The critical opinions may as well be here quoted, at least in part. Dr. Griswold says:

“Seeking expression, yet shrinking from notoriety, and with a full share of that respect for a just fame and appreciation which belongs to every high-toned mind, yet oppressed by its shadow when circumstance

¹ *The Poetical Writings of Elizabeth Oakes Smith*. First complete edition. New York, 1840.

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is the impelling motive of publication, the writings of Mrs. Smith might well be supposed to betray great inequality; still in her many contributions to the magazines, it is remarkable how few of her pieces display the usual carelessness and haste of magazine articles. As an essayist especially, while graceful and lively, she is compact and vigorous; while through poems, essays, tales, and criticisms (for her industrious pen seems equally skilful and happy in each of these departments of literature), through all her manifold writings, indeed, there runs the same beautiful vein of philosophy, viz., that truth and goodness of themselves impart a holy light to the mind which gives it a power far above mere intellectuality; that the highest order of human intelligence springs from the moral and not the reasoning faculties. . . . Mrs. Smith's most popular poem is *The Acorn*, which, though inferior in high inspiration to *The Sinless Child*, is by many preferred for its happy play of fancy and proper finish. Her sonnets, of which she has written many, have not yet been as much admired as the *April Rain*, *The Brook*, and other fugitive pieces, which we find in many popular collections."

The Sinless Child was originally published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, where it at once attracted much attention from the novelty of its conception and the general grace and purity of its style.

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Undoubtedly it is one of the most original of American poems, surpassed in this respect, we think, only by Maria del Occidente's *Bride of Seven*. Of course, we speak merely of long poems. We have had in this country many brief fugitive pieces far excelling in this most important point (originality) either *The Bride of Seven* or *The Sinless Child*, far excelling, indeed, any transatlantic poems. After all, it is chiefly in works of what is absurdly termed "sustained effort" that we fall in any material respect behind our progenitors.

The Sinless Child is quite long, including more than two hundred stanzas, generally of eight lines. The metre throughout is iambic tetrameter, alternating with trimeter; in other words, lines of four iam-buses alternate with lines of three. The variations from this order are rare. The design of the poem is very imperfectly made out. The conception is much better than the execution. "A simple cottage maiden, Eva, given to the world in the widowhood of one parent and the angelic existence of the other . . . is found from her birth to be as meek and gentle as are those pale flowers that look imploringly upon us. . . . She is gifted with the power of interpreting the beautiful mysteries of our earth. . . . For her the song of the bird is not merely the gushing forth of a nature too full of blessedness to be silent . . . the humblest plant, the simplest insect, is each alive with truth. . . . She sees the world not merely

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with mortal eyes, but looks within to the pure internal life of which the outward is but a type," etc., etc. These passages are taken from the Argument prefixed to Part I. The general thesis of the poetess may, perhaps, be stated as the demonstration that the superior wisdom is moral rather than intellectual; but it may be doubted whether her subject was ever precisely apparent to herself. In a word, she seems to have vacillated between several conceptions, the only very definite idea being that of extreme beauty and purity in a child. At one time we fancy her, for example, attempting to show that the condition of absolute sanctity is one through which mortality may know all things and hold converse with the angels; at another we suppose it her purpose to "create" (in critical language) an entirely novel being, a something that is neither angel nor mortal, nor yet fairy in the ordinary sense,—in a word, an original *ens*. Besides these two prominent fancies, however, there are various others which seem continually flitting in and out of the poet's vision, so that her whole work has an indeterminate air. Of this she apparently becomes conscious toward the conclusion, and in the final stanza endeavors to remedy the difficulty by summing up her design :

The sinless child, with mission high,
Awhile to earth was given,
To show us that our world should be
The vestibule of heaven.

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Did we but in the holy light
Of truth and goodness rise,
We might communion hold with God
And spirits from the skies.

The conduct of the narrative is scarcely more determinate, if, indeed, *The Sinless Child* can be said to include a narrative at all. The poem is occupied in its first part with a description of the child, her saintly character, her lone wanderings, the lessons she deduces from all animal and vegetable things, and her communings with the angels. We have then discussions with her mother, who is made to introduce episodic tales, one of *Old Richard*, another called *The Defrauded Heart* (a tale of a miser), and another entitled *The Stepmother*. Toward the end of the poem a lover, Albert Linne, is brought upon the scene. He has been reckless and sinful, but is reclaimed by the heavenly nature of Eva. He finds her sleeping in a forest. At this point occur some of the finest and most characteristic passages of the poem.

Unwonted thought, unwonted calm
Upon his spirit fell;
For he unwittingly had sought
Young Eva's hallowed dell,
And breathed that atmosphere of love,
Around her path that grew;
That evil from her steps repelled,
The good unto her drew.

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Mem.—The last quatrain of this stanza would have been more readily comprehended if punctuated and written thus:

And breathed that atmosphere of love
Around her path that grew—
That evil from her steps repelled —
That good unto her drew.

We may as well observe here, too, that, although neatly printed, the volume abounds in typographical errors that very frequently mar the sense, as at page 66, for example, where “come” (near the bottom) is improperly used for “came,” and “scorching” (second line from the top) is substituted for “searching.” We proceed with Albert’s discovery of Eva in the wood.

Now Eva opes her child-like eyes
And lifts her tranquil head;
And Albert, like a guilty thing,
Had from her presence fled.
But Eva marked his troubled brow,
His sad and thoughtful eyes,
As if they sought yet shrank to hold
Their converse with the skies.

“*Communion* with the skies” would have been far better. It seems strange to us that any one should have overlooked the word.

And all her kindly nature stirred,
She prayed him to remain;

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Well conscious that the pure have power,
To balm much human pain.
There mingled too, as in a dream,
About brave Albert Linne,
A real and ideal form,
Her soul had formed within.

We give the punctuation here as we find it; it is incorrect throughout, interfering materially with a proper understanding of the passage. There should be a comma after "And" in the first line, a comma in place of the semicolon at the end of the second line, no point at the end of the third line; a comma after "mingled," and none after "form." These seeming minutiae are of real importance; but we refer to them, in the case of *The Sinless Child*, because here the aggregate of this species of minor error is unusually remarkable. Of course it is the proof-reader or the editor, and not Mrs. Smith, who is to blame.

Her trusting hand fair Eva laid
In that of Albert Linne,
And for one trembling moment turned
Her gentle thoughts within.
Deep tenderness was in the glance
That rested on his face,
As if her woman-heart had found
Its own abiding-place.

And evermore to him it seemed
Her voice more liquid grew—

Elizabeth Oakes Smith

"Dear youth, thy soul and mine are one;
One source their being drew!
And they must mingle evermore—
Thy thoughts of love and me
Will, as a light, thy footsteps guide
To life and mystery."

There was a sadness in her tone,
But love unfathomed deep:
As from the centre of the soul
Where the divine may sleep;
Prophetic was the tone and look,
And Albert's noble heart
Sank with a strange foreboding dread
Lest Eva should depart.

And when she bent her timid eyes
As she beside him knelt,
The pressure of her sinless lips
Upon his brow he felt,
And all of earth and all of sin
Fled from her sainted side;
She, the pure virgin of the soul,
Ordained young Albert's bride.

It would, perhaps, have been out of keeping with the more obvious plan of the poem to make Eva really the bride of Albert. She does not wed him, but dies tranquilly in bed, soon after the spiritual union in the forest. "Eva," says the Argument of Part VII., "hath fulfilled her destiny. Material things can no farther minister to the growth of her spirit. That

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waking of the soul to its own deep mysteries, its oneness with another, has been accomplished. A human soul has been perfected." At this point the poem may be said to have its conclusion.

In looking back at its general plan, we cannot fail to see traces of high poetic capacity. The first point to be commended is the reach or aim of the poetess. She is evidently discontented with the bald routine of commonplace themes, and originality has been, with her, a principal object. In all cases of fictitious composition it should be the first object,—by which we do not mean to say that it can ever be considered as the most important. But, *cæteris paribus*, every class of fiction is the better for originality; every writer is false to his own interest if he fails to avail himself, at the outset, of the effect which is certainly and invariably derivable from the great element, novelty.

The execution of *The Sinless Child* is, as we have already said, inferior to its conception; that is, to its conception as it floated, rather than steadily existed, in the brain of the authoress. She enables us to see that she has very narrowly missed one of those happy "creations" which now and then immortalize the poet. With a good deal more of deliberate thought before putting pen to paper, with a good deal more of the constructive ability, and with more rigorous discipline in the minor merits of style, and of what is termed in the school-prospectuses "composition," Mrs.

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Smith would have made of *The Sinless Child* one of the best, if not the very best, of American poems. While speaking of the execution, or, more properly, the conduct of the work, we may as well mention, first, the obviousness with which the stories introduced by Eva's mother are interpolated, or episodical; it is permitted every reader to see that they have no natural connection with the true theme; and, indeed, there can be no doubt that they were written long before the main narrative was projected. In the second place, we must allude to the artificiality of the "Arguments," or introductory prose passages, prefacing each Part of the poem. Mrs. Smith had no sounder reason for employing them than Milton and the rest of the epicists had for employing them before. If it be said that they are necessary for the proper comprehension of a poem, we reply that this is saying nothing for them, but merely much against the poem which demands them as a necessity. Every work of art should contain within itself all that is required for its own comprehension. An "argument" is but another form of the "This is an ox" subjoined to the portrait of an animal with horns. But in making these objections to the management of *The Sinless Child*, we must not be understood as insisting upon them as at all material, in view of the lofty merit of originality, a merit which pervades and invigorates the whole work, and which, in our opinion, at least,

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is far, very far more than sufficient to compensate for every inartisticality of construction. A work of art may be admirably constructed, and yet be null as regards every essentiality of that truest art which is but the happiest development of nature; but no work of art can embody within itself a proper originality without giving the plainest manifestations of the creative spirit, or, in more common parlance, of genius in its author. The originality of *The Sinless Child* would cover a multitude of greater defects than Mrs. Smith ever committed, and must forever entitle it to the admiration and respect of every competent critic.

As regards detached passages, we think that the episode of "The Stepmother" may be fairly cited as the best in the poem.

You speak of Hobert's second wife, a lofty dame and bold;
I like not her forbidding air, and forehead high and cold.
The orphans have no cause for grief; she dare not give it now,
Though nothing but a ghostly fear her heart of pride could bow.

One night the boy his mother called; they heard him weeping
say:

"Sweet mother, kiss poor Eddy's cheek and wipe his tears
away."

Red grew the lady's brow with rage, and yet she feels a strife
Of anger and of terror, too, at thought of that dead wife.

Wild roars the wind; the lights burn blue; the watch-dog
howls with fear;

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Loud neighs the steed from out the stall. What form is gliding near ?

No latch is raised, no step is heard, but a phantom fills the space—

A sheeted spectre from the dead, with cold and leaden face.

What boots it that no other eye beheld the shade appear ?

The guilty lady's guilty soul beheld it plain and clear.

It slowly glides within the room and sadly looks around,

And, stooping, kissed her daughter's cheek with lips that gave no sound.

Then softly on the step-dame's arm she laid a death-cold hand,
Yet it hath scorched within the flesh like to a burning brand;
And gliding on with noiseless foot, o'er winding stair and hall,
She nears the chamber where is heard her infant's trembling call.

She smoothed the pillow where he lay, she warmly tucked the bed,

She wiped his tears and stroked the curls that clustered round his head.

The child, caressed, unknowing fear, hath nestled him to rest;
The mother folds her wings beside—the mother from the blest!

The metre of this episode has been altered from its original form, and, we think, improved by the alteration. Formerly, in place of four lines of seven iam-buses, the stanza consisted of eight lines: a line of four iam-buses alternating with one of three, a more ordinary and artificial, therefore a less desirable, arrangement. In the three last quatrains there is an awkward vacillation between the present and perfect tenses, as in the

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words "beheld," "glides," "kissed," "laid," "hath scorched," "smoothed," "wiped," "hath nestled," "folds." These petty objections, of course, will by no means interfere with the reader's appreciation of the episode, with his admiration of its pathos, its delicacy, and its grace; we had almost forgotten to say, of its pure and high imagination.

We proceed to cull from *The Sinless Child* a few brief but happy passages at random:

Gentle she was and full of love,
With voice exceeding sweet,
And eyes of dove-like tenderness
Where joy and sadness meet.

With calm and tranquil eye
That turned instinctively to seek
The blueness of the sky.

Bright missals from angelic throngs
In every by-way left—
How were the earth of glory shorn
Were it of flowers bereft!

And wheresoe'er the weary heart
Turns in its dim despair,
The meek-eyed blossom upward looks,
Inviting it to prayer.

The very winds were hushed to peace
Within the quiet dell,
Or murmured through the rustling bough
Like breathings of a shell.

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The mystery of life;
Its many hopes, its many fears,
Its sorrow and its strife—
A spirit to behold in all
To guide, admonish, cheer,—
Forever, in all time and place,
To feel an angel near.

I may not scorn the spirit's rights
For I have seen it rise,
All written o'er with thought, thought, thought,
As with a thousand eyes.

And there are things that blight the soul
As with a mildew blight,
And in the temple of the Lord
Put out the blessed light.

It is in the point of passages such as these, in their vigor, terseness, and novelty, combined with exquisite delicacy, that the more obvious merit of the poem consists. A thousand such quotable paragraphs are interspersed through the work, and of themselves would be sufficient to insure its popularity. But we repeat that a far loftier excellence lies *perdu* amid the minor deficiencies of *The Sinless Child*.

The other poems of the volume are, as entire compositions, nearer perfection, but, in general, have less of the true poetical element. *The Acorn* is perfect as regards its construction; although, to be sure, the design is so simple that it could scarcely be marred in its execution. The idea is the old one of detailing the

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progress of a plant from its germ to its maturity, with the uses and general vicissitudes to which it is subjected. In this case of the acorn the vicissitudes are well imagined, and the execution is more skilfully managed, is more definite, vigorous, and pronounced, than in the longer poem. The chief of the minor objections is to the rhythm, which is imperfect, vacillating awkwardly between iambuses and anapaests, after such fashion that it is impossible to decide whether the rhythm in itself, that is, whether the general intention, is anapaestical or iambic. Anapaests introduced, for the relief of monotone, into an iambic rhythm, are not only admissible but commendable, if not absolutely demanded; but in this case they prevail to such an extent as to overpower the iambic intention, thus rendering the whole versification difficult of comprehension. We give, by way of example, a stanza with the scanning divisions and quantities:

They came | with gifts | that should life | bestow; |
The dew | and the li | ving air— |
The bane | that should work | its dead | ly woe, |
The lit | tle men | had there; |
In the gray | moss cup | was the mil | dew brought, |
The worm | in a rose- | leaf rolled, |
And ma | ny things | with destruc | tion fraught |
That its doom | were quick | ly told. |

Here iambuses and anapaests are so nearly balanced

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that the ear hesitates to receive the rhythm as either anapæstic or iambic; that is, it hesitates to receive it as anything at all. A rhythm should always be distinctly marked by its first foot; that is to say, if the design is iambic, we should commence with an unmistakable lambus, and proceed with this foot until the ear gets fairly accustomed to it before we attempt variation; for which, indeed, there is no necessity unless for the relief of monotone. When the rhythm is in this manner thoroughly recognized, we may sparingly vary with anapæsts (or if the rhythm be trochaic, with dactyls). Spondees, still more sparingly, as absolute discords, may be also introduced either in an iambic or trochaic rhythm. In common with a very large majority of American, and, indeed, of European poets, Mrs. Smith seems to be totally unacquainted with the principles of versification—by which, of course, we mean its rationale. Of technical rules on the subject there are rather more than enough in our prosodies, and from these abundant rules are deduced the abundant blunders of our poets. There is not a prosody in existence which is worth the paper on which it is printed.

Of the miscellaneous poems included in the volume before us, we greatly prefer *The Summons Answered*. It has more of power, more of genuine imagination than anything written by its author. It is the story of three "bacchanals," who, on their way from the

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scene of their revelry, are arrested by the beckoning of a white hand from the partially unclosing door of a tomb. One of the party obeys the summons. It is the tomb of his wife. We quote the two concluding stanzas:

This restless life with its little fears,
Its hopes that fade so soon,
With its yearning tenderness and tears,
And the burning agony that sears—
The sun gone down at noon—
The spirit crushed to its prison wall,
Mindless of all beside,—
This young Richard saw, and felt it all—
Well might the dead abide !

The crimson light in the east is high,
The hoar-frost coldly gleams,
And Richard, chilled to the heart well-nigh,
Hath raised his wildered and bloodshot eye
From that long night of dreams.
He shudders to think of the reckless band
And the fearful oath he swore—
But most he thinks of the clay-cold hand,
That opened the old tomb door.

With the quotation of these really noble passages—noble, because full of the truest poetic energy—we take leave of the fair authoress. She is entitled, beyond doubt, to all, and perhaps to much more than, the commendation she has received. Her faults are among the peccadilloes, and her merits among the sterling excellencies of the Muse.



William Gilmore Simms¹



MR. SIMMS, we believe, made his first, or nearly his first, appearance before an American audience with a small volume entitled *Martin Faber*, an amplification of a much shorter fiction. He had some difficulty in getting it published, but the Harpers finally undertook it, and it did credit to their judgment. It was well received, both by the public and the more discriminative few, although some of the critics objected that the story was an imitation of *Miserrimus*, a very powerful fiction by the author of *Pickwick Abroad*. The original tale, however, the germ of *Martin Faber*, was written long before the publication of *Miserrimus*. But independently of this fact, there is not the slightest ground for the charge of imitation. The thesis and incidents of the two works are totally dissimilar; the idea of resemblance arises only from the absolute identity of effect wrought by both.

¹ Wiley & Putnam's Library of American Books. No. IV. *The Wigwam and the Cabin*. By William Gilmore Simms. First Series.

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Martin Faber was succeeded, at short intervals, by a great number and variety of fictions, some brief, but many of the ordinary novel size. Among these we may notice *Guy Rivers*, *The Partisan*, *The Yemassee*, *Mellichampe*, *Beauchampe*, and *Richard Hurdia*. The last two were issued anonymously, the author wishing to ascertain whether the success of his books (which was great) had anything to do with his mere name as the writer of previous works. The result proved that popularity, in Mr. Simms's case, arose solely from intrinsic merit, for *Beauchampe* and *Richard Hurdia* were the most popular of his fictions, and excited very general attention and curiosity. *Border Beagles* was another of his anonymous novels, published with the same end in view, and, although disfigured by some instances of bad taste, was even more successful than *Richard Hurdia*.

The "bad taste" of the *Border Beagles* was more particularly apparent in *The Partisan*, *The Yemassee*, and one or two other of the author's earlier works, and displayed itself most offensively in a certain fondness for the purely disgusting or repulsive, where the intention was or should have been merely the horrible. The writer evinced a strange propensity for minute details of human and brute suffering, and even indulged at times in more unequivocal obscenities. His English, too, was, in his efforts, exceedingly objectionable,—verbose, involute, and not unfrequently un-

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grammatical. He was especially given to pet words, of which we remember at present only "hug," "coil," and the compound "old-time," and introduced them upon all occasions. Neither was he at this period particularly dexterous in the conduct of his stories. His improvement, however, was rapid at all these points, although, on the two first counts of our indictment, there is still abundant room for improvement. But whatever may have been his early defects, or whatever are his present errors, there can be no doubt that from the very beginning he gave evidence of genius, and that of no common order. His *Martin Faber*, in our opinion, is a more forcible story than its supposed prototype, *Miserrimus*. The difference in the American reception of the two is to be referred to the fact (we blush while recording it) that *Miserrimus* was understood to be the work of an Englishman, and *Martin Faber* was known to be the composition of an American, as yet unaccredited in our Republic of Letters. The fiction of Mr. Simms gave indication, we repeat, of genius, and that of no common order. Had he been even a Yankee, this genius would have been rendered immediately manifest to his countrymen, but unhappily (perhaps) he was a Southerner, and united the Southern pride, the Southern dislike to the making of bargains, with the Southern supineness and general want of tact in all matters relating to the making of money. His book, therefore, depended

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entirely upon its own intrinsic value and resources, but with these it made its way in the end. The "intrinsic value" consisted, first, of a very vigorous imagination in the conception of the story; secondly, in artistic skill manifested in its conduct; thirdly, in general vigor, life, movement,—the whole resulting in deep interest on the part of the reader. These high qualities Mr. Simms has carried with him in his subsequent books; and they are qualities which, above all others, the fresh and vigorous intellect of America should and does esteem. It may be said, upon the whole, that while there are several of our native writers who excel the author of *Martin Faber* at particular points, there is, nevertheless, not one who surpasses him in the aggregate of the higher excellences of fiction. We confidently expect him to do much for the lighter literature of his country.

The volume now before us has a title which may mislead the reader. *The Wigwam and the Cabin* is merely a generic phrase, intended to designate the subject-matter of a series of short tales, most of which have first seen the light in the *Annals*. "The material employed," says the author, "will be found to illustrate, in large degree, the border history of the South. I can speak with confidence of the general truthfulness of its treatment. The life of the planter, the squatter, the Indian, the negro, the bold and hardy pioneer, and the vigorous yeoman,—these are

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the subjects. In their delineation I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and, in frequent instances, from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of men."

All the tales in this collection have merit, and the first has merit of a very peculiar kind. *Grayling, or Murder Will Out*, is the title. The story was well received in England, but on this fact no opinion can be safely based. *The Athenæum*, we believe, or some other of the London weekly critical journals, having its attention called (no doubt through personal influence) to Carey & Hart's beautiful annual, *The Gift* found it convenient, in the course of its notice, to speak at length of some particular article, and *Murder Will Out* probably arrested the attention of the sub-editor who was employed in so trivial a task as the patting on the head an American book,—arrested his attention first from its title (murder being a taking theme with the Cockney), and secondly from its details of southern forest scenery. Large quotations were made, as a matter of course, and very ample commendation bestowed, the whole criticism proving nothing, in our opinion, but that the critic had not read a single syllable of the story. The critique, however, had at least the good effect of calling American attention to the fact that an American might possibly do a decent thing (provided the possibility were first admitted by the British sub-editors), and the result was, first, that

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quite as matters of course by almost every person with whom he converses. The fact is that, when brought face to face with each other, we are constrained to a certain amount of honesty by the sheer trouble it causes us to mould the countenance to a lie. We put on paper with a grave air what we could not for our lives assert personally to a friend without either blushing or laughing outright. That the opinion of the press is not an honest opinion, that necessarily it is impossible that it should be an honest opinion, is never denied by the members of the press themselves. Individual presses, of course, are now and then honest, but I speak of the combined effect. Indeed, it would be difficult for those conversant with the *modus operandi* of public journals to deny the general falsity of impression conveyed. Let, in America, a book be published by an unknown, careless, or uninfluential author; if he publishes it "on his own account," he will be confounded at finding that no notice of it is taken at all. If it has been entrusted to a publisher of caste, there will appear forthwith in each of the leading business papers a variously phrased critique to the extent of three or four lines, and to the effect that "we have received from the fertile press of So and So, a volume entitled 'This and That,' which appears to be well worthy perusal, and which is 'got up' in the customary neat style of the enterprising firm of So and So." On the other hand, let our author

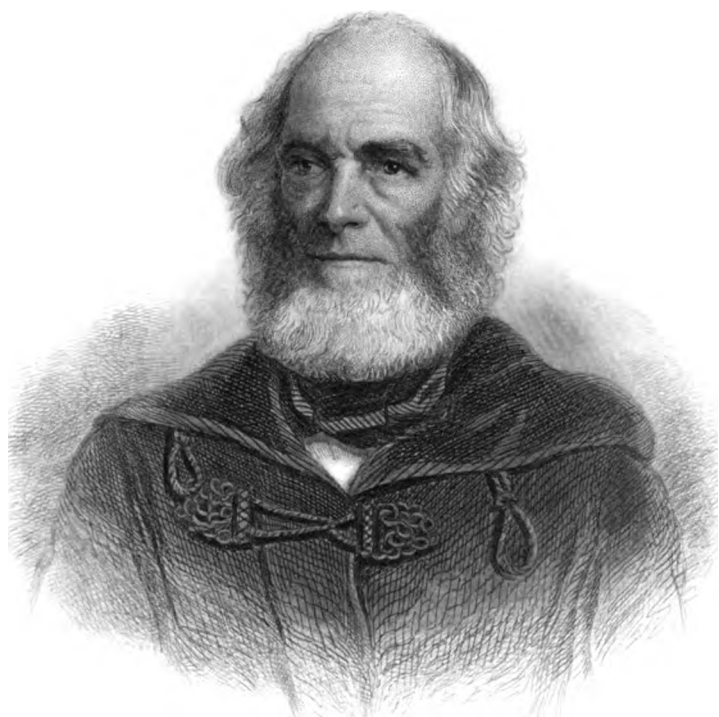


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MR. BRYANT'S position in the poetical world is, perhaps, better settled than that of any American. There is less difference of opinion about his rank; but, as usual, the agreement is more decided in private literary circles than in what appears to be the public expression of sentiment as gleaned from the press. I may as well observe here, too, that this coincidence of opinion in private circles is in all cases very noticeable when compared with the discrepancy of the apparent public opinion. In private it is quite a rare thing to find any strongly marked disagreement; I mean, of course, about mere authorial merit. The author accustomed to seclusion, and mingling for the first time freely with the literary people about him, is invariably startled and delighted to find that the decisions of his own unbiassed judgment, decisions to which he has refrained from giving voice on account of their broad contradiction to the decision of the press, are sustained and considered

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have acquired influence, experience, or (what will stand him in good stead of either) effrontery, on the issue of his book he will obtain from his publisher a hundred copies (or more, as the case may be) "for distribution among friends connected with the press." Armed with these, he will call personally either at the office or (if he understands his game) at the private residence of every editor within his reach, enter into conversation, compliment the journalist, interest him, as if incidentally, in the subject of the book, and finally, watching an opportunity, beg leave to hand him "a volume which, quite opportunely, is on the very matter now under discussion." If the editor seems sufficiently interested, the rest is left to fate; but if there is any lukewarmness (usually indicated by a polite regret on the editor's part that he really has "no time to render the work that justice which its importance demands"), then our author is prepared to understand and to sympathize; has, luckily, a friend thoroughly conversant with the topic, and who (perhaps) could be persuaded to write some account of the volume, provided that the editor would be kind enough just to glance over the critique and amend it in accordance with his own particular views. Glad to fill half a column or so of his editorial space, and still more glad to get rid of his visitor, the journalist assents. The author retires, consults the friend, instructs him concerning the strong points of the

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volume, and insinuating in some shape a *quid pro quo*, gets an elaborate critique written (or, what is more usual and far more simple, writes it himself), and his business in this individual quarter is accomplished. Nothing more than sheer impudence is requisite to accomplish it in all.

Now the effect of this system (for it has really grown to be such) is obvious. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, men of genius, too indolent and careless about worldly concerns to bestir themselves after this fashion, have also that pride of intellect which would prevent them, under any circumstances, from even insinuating, by the presentation of a book to a member of the press, a desire to have that book reviewed. They, consequently, and their works, are utterly overwhelmed and extinguished in the flood of the apparent public adulation upon which, in gilded barges, are borne triumphant the ingenious toady and the diligent quack.

In general, the books of the toadies and quacks, not being read at all, are safe from any contradiction of this self-bestowed praise; but now and then it happens that the excess of the laudation works out in part its own remedy. Men of leisure, hearing one of the toady works commended, look at it, read its preface and a few pages of its body, and throw it aside with disgust, wondering at the ill taste of the editors who extol it. But there is an iteration and a continuous

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reiteration of the panegyric, till these men of leisure begin to suspect themselves in the wrong, to fancy that there may really be something good lying *perdu* in the volume. In a fit of desperate curiosity they read it through critically, their indignation growing hotter at each succeeding page till it gets the better even of contempt. The result is that reviews now appear in various quarters entirely at variance with the opinions so generally expressed, and which, but for these indignation reviews, would have passed universally current as the opinion of the public. It is in this manner that those gross seeming discrepancies arise which so often astonish us, but which vanish instantaneously in private society.

But although it may be said in general that Mr. Bryant's position is comparatively well settled, still, for some time past, there has been a growing tendency to underestimate him, the new licentious "schools" of poetry (I do not now speak of the transcendentalists, who are the merest nobodies, fatiguing even themselves, but the Tennysonian and Barrettian schools) having, in their rashness of spirit, much in accordance with the whole spirit of the age, thrown into the shade necessarily all that seems akin to the conservatism of half a century ago. The conventionalities, even the most justifiable *decora*, of composition, are regarded, *per se*, with a suspicious eye. When I say *per se*, I mean that, from finding them so long in

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connection with conservatism of thought, we have come at last to dislike them, not merely as the outward visible signs of that conservatism, but as things evil in themselves. It is very clear that those accuracies and elegancies of style and of general manner, which, in the time of Pope, were considered as *prima facie* and indispensable indications of genius, are now conversely regarded. How few are willing to admit the possibility of reconciling genius with artistic skill! Yet this reconciliation is not only possible, but an absolute necessity. It is a mere prejudice which has hitherto prevented the union, by studiously insisting upon a natural repulsion which not only does not exist, but which is at war with all the analogies of nature. The greatest poems will not be written until this prejudice is annihilated; and I mean to express a very exalted opinion of Mr. Bryant when I say that his works in time to come will do much toward the annihilation.

I have never disbelieved in the perfect consistency, and even congeniality, of the highest genius and the profoundest art; but in the case of the author of *The Ages* I have fallen into the general error of undervaluing his poetic ability on account of the mere "elegancies and accuracies" to which allusion has already been made. I confess that, with an absolute abstraction from all personal feelings, and with the most sincere intention to do justice, I was at one

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period beguiled into this popular error; there can be no difficulty, therefore, on my part, in excusing the inadvertence in others.

It will never do to claim for Bryant a genius of the loftiest order, but there has been latterly, since the days of Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Lowell, a growing disposition to deny him genius in any respect. He is now commonly spoken of as "a man of high poetical talent, very 'correct,' with a warm appreciation of the beauty of nature and great descriptive powers, but rather too much of the old-school manner of Cowper, Goldsmith, and Young." This is the truth, but not the whole truth. Mr. Bryant has genius, and that of a marked character, but it has been overlooked by modern schools, because deficient in those externals which have become in a measure symbolical of those schools.

Dr. Griswold, in summing up his comments on Bryant, has the following significant objections: "His genius is not versatile; he has related no history; he has not sung of the passion of love; he has not described artificial life. Still the tenderness and feeling in *The Death of the Flowers*, *Rizpah*, *The Indian Girl's Lament*, and other pieces, show that he might have excelled in delineations of the gentler passions had he made them his study."

Now, in describing no artificial life, in relating no history, in not singing the passion of love, the poet

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has merely shown himself the profound artist, has merely evinced a proper consciousness that such are not the legitimate themes of poetry. That they are not, I have repeatedly shown, or attempted to show, and to go over the demonstration now would be foreign to the gossiping and desultory nature of the present article. What Dr. Griswold means by "the gentler passions" is, I presume, not very clear to himself, but it is possible that he employs the phrase in consequence of the gentle, unpassionate emotion induced by the poems of which he quotes the titles. It is precisely this "unpassionate emotion" which is the limit of the true poetical art. Passion proper and poesy are discordant. Poetry, in elevating, tranquillizes the soul. With the heart it has nothing to do. For a fuller explanation of these views I refer the reader to an analysis of a poem by Mrs. Welby, an analysis contained in an article called *Marginalia*, and published about a year ago in *The Democratic Review*.

The editor of *The Poets and Poetry of America* thinks the literary precocity of Bryant remarkable. "There are few recorded more remarkable," he says. The first edition of *The Embargo* was in 1808, and the poet was born in 1794; he was more than thirteen, then, when the satire was printed; although it is reported to have been written a year earlier. I quote a few lines:

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Oh, might some patriot rise, the gloom dispel,
Chase Error's mist and break the magic spell!
But vain the wish; for, hark! the murmuring meed
Of hoarse applause from yonder shed proceed.
Enter and view the thronging concourse there,
Intent with gaping mouth and stupid stare;
While in the midst their supple leader stands,
Harangues aloud, and flourishes his hands,
To adulation tunes his servile throat,
And sues successful for each blockhead's vote.

This is a fair specimen of the whole, both as regards its satirical and rhythmical power. A satire is, of course, no poem. I have known boys of an earlier age do better things, although the case is rare. All depends upon the course of education. Bryant's father "was familiar with the best English literature, and perceiving in his son indications of superior genius, attended carefully to his instruction, taught him the art of composition, and guided his literary taste." This being understood, the marvel of such verse as I have quoted ceases at once, even admitting it to be thoroughly the boy's own work; but it is difficult to make any such admission. The father must have suggested, revised, retouched.

The longest poem of Bryant is *The Ages*—thirty-five Spenserian stanzas. It is the one improper theme of its author. The design is, "from a survey of the past ages of the world, and of the successive advances of mankind in knowledge and virtue, to justify and

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confirm the hopes of the philanthropist for the future destinies of the human race." All this would have been more rationally, because more effectually, accomplished in prose. Dismissing it as a poem (which in its general tendency it is not), one might commend the force of its argumentation but for the radical error of deducing a hope of progression from the cycles of physical nature.

The sixth stanza is a specimen of noble versification (within the narrow limits of the iambic pentameter):

Look on this beautiful world, and read the truth
In her fair page; see, every season brings
New change to her of everlasting youth;
Still the green soil with joyous living things
Swarms; the wide air is full of joyous wings;
And myriads still are happy in the sleep
Of Ocean's azure gulfs, and where he flings
The restless surge. Eternal Love doth keep
In his complacent arms the earth, the air, the deep.

The cadences here at "page," "swarms," and "surge" cannot be surpassed. There are comparatively few consonants. Liquids and the softer vowels abound, and the partial line after the pause at "surge," with the stately march of the succeeding Alexandrine, is one of the finest conceivable finales.

The poem, in general, has unity, completeness. Its tone of calm, elevated, and hopeful contemplation is

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well sustained throughout. There is an occasional quaint grace of expression, as in

Nurse of full streams, and lifter up of proud
Sky-mingling mountains that o'erlook the cloud!

or of antithetical and rhythmical force combined, as in

The shock that hurled
To dust, in many fragments dashed and strown,
The throne whose roots were in another world,
And whose far-stretching shadow awed our own.

But we look in vain for anything more worthy commendation.

Thanatopsis is the poem by which its author is best known, but is by no means his best poem. It owes the extent of its celebrity to its nearly absolute freedom from defect, in the ordinary understanding of the term. I mean to say that its negative merit recommends it to the public attention. It is a thoughtful, well-phrased, well-constructed, well-versified poem. The concluding thought is exceedingly noble, and has done wonders for the success of the whole composition.

The Waterfowl is very beautiful, but, like *Thanatopsis*, owes a great deal to its completeness and pointed termination.

Oh, Fairest of the Rural Maids! will strike every poet as the truest poem written by Bryant. It is richly ideal.

June is sweet, and perfectly well modulated in its

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rhythm, and inexpressibly pathetic. It serves well to illustrate my previous remarks about the passion in its connection with poetry. In *June* there is, very properly, nothing of the intense passion of grief, but the subdued sorrow which comes up, as if perforce, to the surface of the poet's gay sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul, while there is yet a spiritual elevation in the thrill.

And what if cheerful shouts at noon
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon
With fairy laughter blent ?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothed lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument ?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know, I know I should not see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow ;
But if around my place of sleep
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go :
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom,
Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

The thoughts here belong to the highest class of poetry, the imaginative-natural, and are of themselves sufficient to stamp their author a man of genius.

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I copy at random a few passages of similar cast,
inducing a similar conviction:

The great heavens
Seem to stoop down upon the scene in love,
A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue
Than that which bends above the eastern hills.

Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked and wooed
In a forgotten language, and old tunes,
From instruments of unremembered form,
Gave the soft winds a voice.

Breezes of the South
That toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,
And pass the prairie hawk, that, poised on high,
Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not.

On the breast of Earth
I lie, and listen to her mighty voice,
A voice of many tones sent up from streams
That wander through the gloom, from woods unseen
Swayed by the sweeping of the tides of air;
From rocky chasms where darkness dwells all day,
And hollows of the great invisible hills,
And sands that edge the ocean, stretching far
Into the night—a melancholy sound!

All the green herbs
Are stirring in his breath; a thousand flowers,
By the road side and the borders of the brook,
Nod gayly to each other.

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[There is a fine "echo of sound to sense" in "the borders of the brook," etc.; and in the same poem from which these lines are taken (*The Summer Wind*) may be found two other equally happy examples, *e.g.*

For me, I lie
Languidly in the shade, where the thick turf,
Yet virgin from the kisses of the sun,
Retains some freshness.

And again:

All is silent, save the faint
And interrupted murmur of the bee
Settling on the sick flowers, and then again
Instantly on the wing.

I resume the imaginative extracts.]

Paths, homes, graves, ruins from the lowest glen
To where life shrinks from the fierce Alpine air.

And the blue gentian flower that in the breeze
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last.

A shoot of that old vine that made
The nations silent in the shade.

But 'neath yon crimson tree,
Lover to listening maid might breathe his flame,
Nor mark, within its roseate canopy,
Her flush of maiden shame.

The mountains that in fold,
In their wild sweep, the colored landscape round,
Seem groups of giant kings in purple and gold
That guard the enchanted ground.

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[This latter passage is especially beautiful. Happily to endow inanimate nature with sentience and a capability of action, is one of the severest tests of the poet.]

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,
The desert and illimitable air,
Lone, wandering, but not lost.

Pleasant shall be thy way, where meekly bows
The shutting flower, and darkling waters pass
And 'twixt the o'ershadowing branches and the grass.

Sweet odors in the sea air, sweet and strange,
Shall tell the home-sick mariner of the shore,
And, listening to thy murmur, he shall deem
He hears the rustling leaf and running stream.

In a sonnet, *To* —, are some richly imaginative lines. We quote the whole:

Ay, thou art for the grave; thy glances shine
Too brightly to shine long: another spring
Shall deck her for men's eyes, but not for thine,
Sealed in a sleep which knows no waking.
The fields for thee have no medicinal leaf,
And the vexed ore no mineral of power;
And they who love thee wait in anxious grief
Till the slow plague shall bring the fatal hour.
Glide softly to thy rest, then: death should come
Gently to one of gentle mould like thee,

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As light winds wandering through groves of bloom
Detach the delicate blossom from the tree.
Close thy sweet eyes calmly and without pain,
And we will trust in God to see thee yet again.

The happiest *finale* to these brief extracts will be the magnificent conclusion of *Thanatopsis*.

So live that, when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one that draws the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

In the minor morals of the Muse Mr. Bryant excels. In versification (as far as he goes) he is unsurpassed in America—unless, indeed, by Mr. Sprague. Mr. Longfellow is not so thorough a versifier within Mr. Bryant's limits, but a far better one, upon the whole, on account of his greater range. Mr. B., however, is by no means always accurate, or defensible, for accurate is not the term. His lines are occasionally unpronounceable through excess of harsh consonants, as in

As if they loved to breast the breeze that sweeps the cool
clear sky.

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Now and then he gets out of his depth in attempting anapæstic rhythm, of which he makes sad havoc, as in

And Rizpah, once the loveliest of all
That bloomed and smiled in the court of Saul.

Not unfrequently, too, even his pentameters are inexcusably rough, as in

Kind influence. Lo! their orbs burn more bright,

which can only be read metrically by drawing out "influence" into three marked syllables, shortening the long monosyllable "Lo!" and lengthening the short one "their."

Mr. Bryant is not devoid of mannerisms, one of the most noticeable of which is his use of the epithet "old" preceded by some other adjective, *e. g.*

In all that proud old world beyond the deep; . . .
There is a tale about these gray old rocks; . . .
The wide old woods resounded with her song; . . .
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven,

etc., etc., etc. These duplicates occur so frequently as to excite a smile upon each repetition.

Of merely grammatical errors the poet is rarely guilty. Faulty constructions are more frequently chargeable to him. In *The Massacre of Scio* we read:

Till the last link of slavery's chain
Is shivered, to be worn no more.

William Cullen Bryant

What shall be worn no more ? The chain, of course, but the link is implied. It will be understood that I pick these flaws only with difficulty from the poems of Bryant. He is, in the "minor morals," the most generally correct of our poets.

He is now fifty-two years of age. In height, he is, perhaps, five feet nine. His frame is rather robust. His features are large but thin. His countenance is sallow, nearly bloodless. His eyes are piercing gray, deep set, with large projecting eyebrows. His mouth is wide and massive, the expression of the smile hard, cold, even sardonic. The forehead is broad, with prominent organs of ideality; a good deal bald; the hair thin and grayish, as are also the whiskers, which he wears in a simple style. His bearing is quite distinguished, full of the aristocracy of intellect. In general, he looks in better health than before his last visit to England. He seems active, physically and morally energetic. His dress is plain to the extreme of simplicity, although of late there is a certain degree of Anglicism about it.

In character no man stands more loftily than Bryant. The peculiarly melancholy expression of his countenance has caused him to be accused of harshness, or coldness of heart. Never was there a greater mistake. His soul is charity itself, in all respects generous and noble. His manners are undoubtedly reserved.

Of late days he has nearly, if not altogether aban-

William Cullen Bryant

doned literary pursuits, although still editing, with unabated vigor, the *New York Evening Post*. He is married (Mrs. Bryant still living), has two daughters (one of them Mrs. Parke Godwin), and is residing for the present at Vice-Chancellor McCown's, near the junction of Warren and Church streets.





The Literati

[In 1846, Mr. Poe published in *The Lady's Book* a series of six articles, entitled "The Literati of New York City," in which he professed to give some "honest opinions at random respecting their authorial merits, with occasional words of personality." The series was introduced by the following paragraphs, and the personal sketches were given in the order in which they are here reprinted, from "George Bush" to "Richard Adams Locke." The other notices of American and foreign writers were contributed by Mr. Poe to various journals, chiefly in the last four or five years of his life.]

IN a criticism on Bryant I was at some pains in pointing out the distinction between the popular "opinion" of the merits of contemporary authors and that held and expressed of them in private literary society. The former species of "opinion" can be called "opinion" only by courtesy. It is the public's own, just as we consider a book our own when we have bought it. In general, this

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opinion is adopted from the journals of the day, and I have endeavored to show that the cases are rare indeed in which these journals express any other sentiment about books than such as may be attributed directly or indirectly to the authors of the books. The most "popular," the most "successful" writers among us (for a brief period, at least) are, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, persons of mere address, perseverance, effrontery—in a word, busybodies, toadies, quacks. These people easily succeed in boring editors (whose attention is too often entirely engrossed by politics or other "business" matter) into the admission of favorable notices written or caused to be written by interested parties, or, at least, into the admission of some notice where, under ordinary circumstances, no notice would be given at all. In this way ephemeral "reputations" are manufactured, which, for the most part, serve all the purposes designed; that is to say, the putting money into the purse of the quack and the quack's publisher; for there never was a quack who could be brought to comprehend the value of mere fame. Now, men of genius will not resort to these manœuvres, because genius involves in its very essence a scorn of chicanery; and thus for a time the quacks always get the advantage of them, both in respect to pecuniary profit and what appears to be public esteem.

There is another point of view too. Your literary

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quacks court, in especial, the personal acquaintance of those "connected with the press." Now these latter, even when penning a voluntary, that is to say, an uninstigated notice of the book of an acquaintance, feel as if writing not so much for the eye of the public as for the eye of the acquaintance, and the notice is fashioned accordingly. The bad points of the work are slurred over, and the good ones brought out into the best light, all this through a feeling akin to that which makes it unpleasant to speak ill of one to one's face. In the case of men of genius, editors, as a general rule, have no such delicacy, for the simple reason that, as a general rule, they have no acquaintance with these men of genius, a class proverbial for shunning society.

But the very editors who hesitate at saying in print an ill word of an author personally known, are usually the most frank in speaking about him privately. In literary society, they seem bent upon avenging the wrongs self-inflicted upon their own consciences. Here, accordingly, the quack is treated as he deserves, even a little more harshly than he deserves, by way of striking a balance. True merit, on the same principle, is apt to be slightly overrated; but, upon the whole, there is a close approximation to absolute honesty of opinion; and this honesty is further secured by the mere trouble to which it puts one in conversation to model one's countenance to a falsehood. We place on paper without hesitation a tissue of flatteries to

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which in society we could not give utterance, for our lives, without either blushing or laughing outright.

For these reasons there exists a very remarkable discrepancy between the apparent public opinion of any given author's merits and the opinion which is expressed of him orally by those who are best qualified to judge. For example, Mr. Hawthorne, the author of *Twice-Told Tales*, is scarcely recognized by the press or by the public, and when noticed at all, is noticed merely to be damned by faint praise. Now, my own opinion of him is, that, although his walk is limited, and he is fairly to be charged with mannerism, treating all subjects in a similar tone of dreamy innuendo, yet in this walk he evinces extraordinary genius, having no rival either in America or elsewhere; and this opinion I have never heard gainsaid by any one literary person in the country. That this opinion, however, is a spoken and not a written one, is referable to the facts, first, that Mr. Hawthorne is a poor man, and, second, that he is not an ubiquitous quack.

Again, of Mr. Longfellow, who, although a little quacky *per se*, has, through his social and literary position as a man of property and a professor at Harvard, a whole legion of active quacks at his control,—of him what is the apparent popular opinion? Of course, that he is a poetical phenomenon, as entirely without fault as is the luxurious paper upon which his poems are invariably borne to the public eye. In

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private society he is regarded with one voice as a poet of far more than usual ability, a skilful artist, and a well-read man, but as less remarkable in either capacity than as a determined imitator and a dexterous adapter of the ideas of other people. For years I have conversed with no literary person who did not entertain precisely these ideas of Professor L.; and, in fact, on all literary topics there is in society a seemingly wonderful coincidence of opinion. The author accustomed to seclusion, and mingling for the first time with those who have been associated with him only through their works, is astonished and delighted at finding common to all whom he meets conclusions which he had blindly fancied were attained by himself alone and in opposition to the judgment of mankind.

In the series of papers which I now propose, my design is, in giving my own unbiassed opinion of the *Literati* (male and female) of New York, to give at the same time very closely, if not with absolute accuracy, that of conversational society in literary circles. It must be expected, of course, that, in innumerable particulars, I shall differ from the voice, that is to say, from what appears to be the voice of the public; but this is a matter of no consequence whatever.

New York literature may be taken as a fair representation of that of the country at large. The city itself is the focus of American letters. Its authors include, perhaps, one fourth of all in America, and the influence

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they exert on their brethren, if seemingly silent, is none the less extensive and decisive. As I shall have to speak of many individuals, my limits will not permit me to speak of them otherwise than in brief; but this brevity will be merely consistent with the design, which is that of simple opinion, with little of either argument or detail. With one or two exceptions, I am well acquainted with every author to be introduced, and I shall avail myself of the acquaintance to convey, generally, some idea of the personal appearance of all who, in this regard, would be likely to interest my readers. As any precise order or arrangement seems unnecessary and may be inconvenient, I shall maintain none. It will be understood that, without reference to supposed merit or demerit, each individual is introduced absolutely at random.

GEORGE BUSH

The Rev. George Bush is Professor of Hebrew in the University of New York, and has long been distinguished for the extent and variety of his attainments in Oriental literature; indeed, as an Oriental linguist, it is probable that he has no equal among us. He has published a great deal, and his books have always the good fortune to attract attention throughout the civilized world. His *Treatise on the Millennium* is, perhaps, that of his earlier compositions

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by which he is most extensively as well as most favorably known. Of late days he has created a singular commotion in the realm of theology by his *Anastasis, or the Doctrine of the Resurrection, in which it is shown that the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body is not sanctioned by Reason or Revelation*. This work has been zealously attacked, and as zealously defended by the professor and his friends. There can be no doubt that, up to this period, the Bushites have had the best of the battle. The *Anastasis* is lucidly, succinctly, vigorously, and logically written, and proves, in my opinion, everything that it attempts, provided we admit the imaginary axioms from which it starts; and this is as much as can be well said of any theological disquisition under the sun. It might be hinted, too, in reference as well to Professor Bush as to his opponents, "que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas en ce qu'elles nient." A subsequent work on *The Soul*, by the author of *Anastasis*, has made nearly as much noise as the *Anastasis* itself.

Taylor, who wrote so ingeniously *The Natural History of Enthusiasm*, might have derived many a valuable hint from the study of Professor Bush. No man is more ardent in his theories; and these latter are neither few nor commonplace. He is a Mesmerist and a Swedenborgian; has lately been engaged in editing Swedenborg's works, publishing them in numbers. He

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converses with fervor, and often with eloquence. Very probably he will establish an independent church.

He is one of the most amiable men in the world, universally respected and beloved. His frank, unpretending simplicity of demeanor is especially winning.

In person he is tall, nearly six feet, and spare, with large bones. His countenance expresses rather benevolence and profound earnestness than high intelligence. The eyes are piercing; the other features, in general, massive. The forehead, phrenologically, indicates causality and comparison, with deficient ideality,—the organization which induces strict logicity from insufficient premises. He walks with a slouching gait and with an air of abstraction. His dress is exceedingly plain. In respect to the arrangement about his study, he has many of the Magliabechian habits. He is, perhaps, fifty-five years of age, and seems to enjoy good health.

GEORGE H. COLTON

Mr. Colton is noted as the author of *Tecumseh*, and as the originator and editor of *The American Review*, a Whig magazine of the higher (that is to say, of the five-dollar) class. I must not be understood as meaning any disrespect to the work. It is, in my opinion, by far the best of its order in this country,

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and is supported in the way of contribution by many of the very noblest intellects. Mr. Colton, if in nothing else, has shown himself a man of genius in his successful establishment of the magazine within so brief a period. It is now commencing its second year, and I can say, from my own personal knowledge, that its circulation exceeds two thousand; it is probably about two thousand five hundred. So marked and immediate a success has never been attained by any of our five-dollar magazines, with the exception of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, which, in the course of nineteen months (subsequent to the seventh from its commencement), attained a circulation of rather more than five thousand.

I cannot conscientiously call Mr. Colton a good editor, although I think that he will finally be so. He improves wonderfully with experience. His present defects are timidity and a lurking taint of partiality, amounting to positive prejudice (in the vulgar sense) for the literature of the Puritans. I do not think, however, that he is at all aware of such prepossession. His taste is rather unexceptionable than positively good. He has not, perhaps, sufficient fire within himself to appreciate it in others. Nevertheless, he endeavors to do so, and in this endeavor is not inapt to take opinions at second hand,—to adopt, I mean, the opinions of others. He is nervous, and a very trifling

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difficulty disconcerts him, without getting the better of a sort of dogged perseverance, which will make a thoroughly successful man of him in the end. He is (classically) well educated.

As a poet he has done better things than *Tecumseh*, in whose length he has committed a radical and irreparable error, sufficient in itself to destroy a far better book. Some portions of it are truly poetical; very many portions belong to a high order of eloquence; it is invariably well versified, and has no glaring defects, but, upon the whole, is insufferably tedious. Some of the author's shorter compositions, published anonymously in his magazine, have afforded indications even of genius.

Mr. Colton is marked in his personal appearance. He is probably not more than thirty, but an air of constant thought (with a pair of spectacles) causes him to seem somewhat older. He is about five feet eight or nine in height, and fairly proportioned, neither stout nor thin. His forehead is quite intellectual. His mouth has a peculiar expression difficult to describe. Hair light and generally in disorder. He converses fluently, and, upon the whole, well, but grandiloquently, and with a tone half tragical, half pulpital.

In character he is in the highest degree estimable, a most sincere, high-minded, and altogether honorable man. He is unmarried.

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N. P. WILLIS

Whatever may be thought of Mr. Willis's talents, there can be no doubt of the fact that, both as an author and as a man, he has made a good deal of noise in the world—at least for an American. His literary life, in especial, has been one continual *émeute*; but then his literary character has been modified or impelled in a very remarkable degree by his personal one. His success (for in point of fame, if of nothing else, he has certainly been successful) is to be attributed, one third to his mental ability and two thirds to his physical temperament, the latter goading him into the accomplishment of what the former merely gave him the means of accomplishing.

At a very early age Mr. Willis seems to have arrived at an understanding that, in a republic such as ours, the mere man of letters must ever be a cipher, and endeavored, accordingly, to unite the *éclat* of the *littérateur* with that of the man of fashion or of society. He "pushed himself," went much into the world, made friends with the gentler sex, "delivered" poetical addresses, wrote "Scriptural" poems, travelled, sought the intimacy of noted women, and got into quarrels with notorious men. All these things served his purpose, if, indeed, I am right in supposing that he had any purpose at all. It is quite probable

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that, as before hinted, he acted only in accordance with his physical temperament; but, be this as it may, his personal greatly advanced, if it did not altogether establish, his literary fame. I have often carefully considered whether, without the physique of which I speak, there is that in the absolute *morale* of Mr. Willis which would have earned him reputation as a man of letters, and my conclusion is, that he could not have failed to become noted in some degree under almost any circumstances, but that about two thirds (as above stated) of his appreciation by the public should be attributed to those adventures which grew immediately out of his animal constitution.

He received what is usually regarded as a "good education," that is to say, he graduated at college; but his education, in the path he pursued, was worth to him, on account of his extraordinary *savoir faire*, fully twice as much as would have been its value in any common case. No man's knowledge is more available, no man has exhibited greater tact in the seemingly casual display of his wares. With him, at least, a little learning is no dangerous thing. He possessed at one time, I believe, the average quantum of American collegiate lore: a "little Latin and less Greek," a smattering of physical and metaphysical science, and (I should judge) a very little of the mathematics; but all this must be considered as mere guess

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on my part. Mr. Willis speaks French with some fluency, and Italian not quite so well.

Within the ordinary range of belles-lettres authorship, he has evinced much versatility. If called on to designate him by any general literary title, I might term him a magazinist, for his compositions have invariably the species of effect, with the brevity, which the magazine demands. We may view him as a paragraphist, an essayist, or rather "sketcher," a tale writer, and a poet.

In the first capacity he fails. His points, however good, when deliberately wrought, are too *recherchés* to be put hurriedly before the public eye. Mr. W. has by no means the readiness which the editing a newspaper demands. He composes (as did Addison, and as do many of the most brilliant and seemingly dashing writers of the present day) with great labor and frequent erasure and interlineation. His MSS., in this regard, present a very singular appearance, and indicate the vacillation which is, perhaps, the leading trait of his character. A newspaper, too, in its longer articles, its "leaders," very frequently demands argumentation, and here Mr. W. is remarkably out of his element. His exuberant fancy leads him over hedge and ditch, anywhere from the main road, and, besides, he is far too readily self-dispossessed. With time at command, however, his great tact stands him instead of all argumentative power, and enables

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him to overthrow an antagonist without permitting the latter to see how he is overthrown. A fine example of this "management" is to be found in Mr. W.'s reply to a very inconsiderate attack upon his social standing, made by one of the editors of the *New York Courier and Inquirer*. I have always regarded this reply as the highest evidence of its author's ability, as a masterpiece of ingenuity, if not of absolute genius. The skill of the whole lay in this, that without troubling himself to refute the charges themselves, brought against him by Mr. Raymond, he put forth his strength in rendering them null, to all intents and purposes, by obliterating, incidentally and without letting his design be perceived, all the impression these charges were calculated to convey. But this reply can be called a newspaper article only on the ground of its having appeared in a newspaper.

As a writer of "sketches," properly so called, Mr. Willis is unequalled. Sketches, especially of society, are his forte, and they are so for no other reason than that they afford him the best opportunity of introducing the personal Willis; or, more distinctly, because this species of composition is most susceptible of impression from his personal character. The *dégage* tone of this kind of writing, too, best admits and encourages that fancy which Mr. W. possesses in the most extraordinary degree; it is in fancy that he

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reigns supreme; this, more than any one other quality, and, indeed, more than all his other literary qualities combined, has made him what he is. It is this which gives him the originality, the freshness, the point, the piquancy, which appear to be the immediate, but which are, in fact, the mediate, sources of his popularity.¹

In tales (written with deliberation for the magazines) he has shown greater constructiveness than I should have given him credit for had I not read his composi-

¹ As, by metaphysicians and in ordinary discourse, the word "fancy" is used with very little determinateness of meaning, I may be pardoned for repeating here what I have elsewhere said on this topic. I shall thus be saved much misapprehension in regard to the term—one which will necessarily be often employed in the course of this series.

"Fancy," says the author of *Aids to Reflection* (who aided reflection to much better purpose in his *Geneveve*),—"fancy combines, imagination creates." This was intended and has been received as a distinction, but it is a distinction without a difference—without a difference even of degree. The fancy as nearly creates as the imagination, and neither at all. Novel conceptions are merely unusual combinations. The mind of man can imagine nothing which does not really exist; if it could, it would create not only ideally, but substantially, as do the thoughts of God. It may be said, "We imagine a griffin, yet a griffin does not exist." Not the griffin, certainly, but its component parts. It is no more than a collation of known limbs, features, qualities. Thus with all which claims to be new, which appears to be a creation of the intellect—all is re-soluble into the old. The wildest effort of the mind cannot stand the test of this analysis.

Imagination, fancy, fantasy, and humor have in common the elements combination and novelty. The imagination is the first artist of the four. From novel arrangements of old forms which present themselves to it, it selects such only as are harmonious; the result, of course, is beauty itself—using the word in its most extended sense and as inclusive of the sublime. The pure imagination chooses, from either beauty or deformity, only the most combinable things hitherto uncombined, the compound, as a general rule, partaking in character of sublimity or beauty in the ratio of the respective sublimity or beauty of the things combined, which are themselves still to be considered as atomic, that is to say, as previous combinations. But, as often analogously happens in physical chemistry, so not unfrequently does it occur in this chemistry of the intellect, that the admixture of two elements will result in a something that shall have nothing of the quality of one of them, or even nothing of the qualities of either. The range of imagination is thus

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tions of this order, for in this faculty all his other works indicate a singular deficiency. The chief charm even of these tales, however, is still referable to fancy.

As a poet, Mr. Willis is not entitled, I think, to so high a rank as he may justly claim through his prose; and this for the reason that, although fancy is not inconsistent with any of the demands of those classes of prose composition which he has attempted, and,

unlimited. Its materials extend throughout the universe. Even out of deformities it fabricates that beauty which is at once its sole object and its inevitable test. But, in general, the richness of the matters combined, the facility of discovering combinable novelties worth combining, and the absolute "chemical combination" of the completed mass, are the particulars to be regarded in our estimate of imagination. It is this thorough harmony of an imaginative work which so often causes it to be undervalued by the indiscriminating, through the character of obviousness which is superinduced. We are apt to find ourselves asking why it is that these combinations have never been imagined before.

Now, when this question does not occur, when the harmony of the combination is comparatively neglected, and when, in addition to the element of novelty, there is introduced the sub-element of unexpectedness—when, for example, matters are brought into combination which not only have never been combined, but whose combination strikes us as a difficulty happily overcome, the result then appertains to the fancy, and is, to the majority of mankind, more grateful than the purely harmonious one; although, absolutely, it is less beautiful (or grand) for the reason that it is less harmonious.

Carrying its errors into excess—for, however enticing, they are errors still, or nature lies—fancy is at length found infringing upon the province of fantasy. The votaries of this latter delight not only in novelty and unexpectedness of combination, but in the avoidance of proportion. The result is, therefore, abnormal, and, to a healthy mind, affords less of pleasure through its novelty than of pain through its incoherence. When, proceeding a step farther, however, fancy seeks not merely disproportionate but incongruous or antagonistic elements, the effect is rendered more pleasurable by its greater positiveness, there is a merry effort of truth to shake from her that which is no property of hers, and we laugh outright in recognizing humor.

The four faculties in question seem to me all of their class; but when either fancy or humor is expressed to gain an end, is pointed at a purpose, whenever either becomes objective in place of subjective, then it becomes, also, pure wit or sarcasm, just as the purpose is benevolent or malevolent.

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indeed, is a vital element of most of them, still it is at war (as will be understood from what I have said in the foot-note) with that purity and perfection of beauty which are the soul of the poem proper. I wish to be understood as saying this generally of our author's poems. In some instances, seeming to feel the truth of my proposition (that fancy should have no place in the loftier poesy), he has denied it a place, as in *Melanie* and his Scriptural pieces; but, unfortunately, he has been unable to supply the void with the true imagination, and these poems consequently are deficient in vigor, in stamen. The Scriptural pieces are quite "correct," as the French have it, and are much admired by a certain set of readers, who judge of a poem, not by its effect on themselves, but by the effect which they imagine it might have upon themselves were they not unhappily soulless, and by the effect which they take it for granted it does have upon others. It cannot be denied, however, that these pieces are, in general, tame, or indebted for what force they possess to the Scriptural passages of which they are merely paraphrastic. I quote what, in my own opinion, and in that of nearly all my friends, is really the truest poem ever written by Mr. Willis.

The shadows lay along Broadway,
'T was near the twilight tide,
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride.

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Alone walked she, yet viewlessly
Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,
And honor charmed the air,
And all astir looked kind on her
And called her good as fair;
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare,
From lovers warm and true,
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo.
Ah, honored well are charms to sell
When priests the selling do!

Now, walking there was one more fair—
A slight girl, lily-pale,
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail:
'Twixt Want and Scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way;
And the sin forgiven by Christ in heaven
By man is cursed away.

There is about this little poem (evidently written in haste and through impulse) a true imagination. Its grace, dignity, and pathos are impressive, and there

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is more in it of earnestness, of soul, than in anything I have seen from the pen of its author. His compositions, in general, have a taint of worldliness, of insincerity. The identical rhyme in the last stanza is very noticeable, and the whole *finale* is feeble. It would be improved by making the last two lines precede the first two of the stanza.

In classifying Mr. W.'s writings I did not think it worth while to speak of him as a dramatist, because, although he has written plays, what they have of merit is altogether in their character of poem. Of his *Bianca Visconti* I have little to say; it deserved to fail, and did, although it abounded in eloquent passages. *Tortosa* abounded in the same, but had a great many dramatic points well calculated to tell with a conventional audience. Its characters, with the exception of Tomaso, a drunken buffoon, had no character at all, and the plot was a tissue of absurdities, inconsequences, and inconsistencies; yet I cannot help thinking it, upon the whole, the best play ever written by an American.

Mr. Willis has made very few attempts at criticism, and those few (chiefly newspaper articles) have not impressed me with a high idea of his analytic abilities, although with a very high idea of his taste and discrimination.

His style proper may be called extravagant, bizarre, pointed, epigrammatic without being antithetical (this

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is very rarely the case), but, through all its whimsicalities, graceful, classic, and accurate. He is very seldom to be caught tripping in the minor morals. His English is correct; his most outrageous imagery is, at all events, unmixed.

Mr. Willis's career has naturally made him enemies among the envious host of dunces whom he has outstripped in the race for fame; and these his personal manner (a little tinctured with reserve, *brusquerie*, or even haughtiness) is by no means adapted to conciliate. He has innumerable warm friends, however, and is himself a warm friend. He is impulsive, generous, bold, impetuous, vacillating, irregularly energetic, apt to be hurried into error, but incapable of deliberate wrong.

He is yet young, and, without being handsome, in the ordinary sense, is a remarkably well-looking man. In height, he is, perhaps, five feet eleven, and justly proportioned. His figure is put in the best light by the ease and assured grace of his carriage. His whole person and personal demeanor bear about them the traces of "good society." His face is somewhat too full, or rather heavy, in its lower portions. Neither his nose nor his forehead can be defended; the latter would puzzle phrenology. His eyes are a dull bluish-gray, and small. His hair is of a rich brown, curling naturally and luxuriantly. His mouth is well cut; the teeth fine; the expression of the smile intellectual

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and winning. He converses little, well rather than fluently, and in a subdued tone. The portrait of him published about three years ago in *Graham's Magazine* conveys by no means so true an idea of the man as does the sketch (by Lawrence) inserted as frontispiece to a late collection of his poems.

WILLIAM M. GILLESPIE

Mr. William M. Gillespie aided Mr. Park Benjamin, I believe, some years ago, in the editorial conduct of *The New World*, and has been otherwise connected with the periodical press of New York. He is more favorably known, however, as the author of a neat volume entitled *Rome as Seen by a New Yorker*,—a good title to a good book. The endeavor to convey Rome only by those impressions which would naturally be made upon an American gives the work a certain air of originality, the rarest of all qualities in descriptions of the Eternal City. The style is pure and sparkling, although occasionally flippant and dilettantesque. The love of remark is much in the usual way, *selon les règles*, never very exceptionable and never very profound.

Mr. Gillespie is not unaccomplished, converses readily on many topics, has some knowledge of Italian, French, and, I believe, of the classical tongues, with such proficiency in the mathematics as has

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obtained for him a professorship of civil engineering at Union College, Schenectady.

In character he has much general amiability, is warm-hearted, excitable, nervous. His address is somewhat awkward, but "insinuating" from its warmth and vivacity. Speaks continuously and rapidly, with a lisp which, at times, is by no means unpleasing; is fidgety, and never knows how to sit or to stand, or what to do with his hands and feet, or his hat. In the street walks irregularly, mutters to himself, and, in general, appears in a state of profound abstraction.

In person he is about five feet seven inches high, neither stout nor thin, angularly proportioned; eyes large and dark hazel, hair dark and curling, an ill-formed nose, fine teeth, and a smile of peculiar sweetness; nothing remarkable about the forehead. The general expression of the countenance when in repose is rather unprepossessing, but animation very much alters its character. He is probably thirty years of age, unmarried.

CHARLES F. BRIGGS

Mr. Briggs is better known as "Harry Franco," a *nom de plume* assumed since the publication, in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, of his series of papers called *Adventures of Harry Franco*. He also wrote

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for the *Knickerbocker* some articles entitled *The Haunted Merchant*, which have been printed since as a novel, and from time to time subsequently has been a contributor to that journal. The two productions just mentioned have some merit. They depend for their effect upon the relation in a straightforward manner, just as one would talk, of the most commonplace events,—a kind of writing which, to ordinary, and especially to indolent intellects, has a very observable charm. To cultivated or to active minds it is in an equal degree distasteful, even when claiming the merit of originality. Mr. Briggs' manner, however, is an obvious imitation of Smollett, and, as usual with all imitation, produces an unfavorable impression upon those conversant with the original. It is a common failing, also, with imitators, to out-Herod Herod in aping the peculiarities of the model, and, too frequently, the faults are more pertinaciously exaggerated than the merits. Thus, the author of *Harry Franco* carries the simplicity of Smollett sometimes to insipidity, and his picturesque low life is made to degenerate into sheer vulgarity.

If Mr. Briggs has a *forte*, it is a Flemish fidelity that omits nothing, whether agreeable or disagreeable; but I cannot call this *forte* a virtue. He has also some humor, but nothing of an original character. Occasionally he has written good things. A magazine article, called *Dobbs and his Cantelope*, was quite

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easy and clever in its way; but the way is necessarily a small one. And I ought not to pass over without some allusion to it, his sacred novel of *Tom Pepper*. As a novel, it really has not the slightest pretensions. To a genuine artist in literature, he is as Plumbe to Sully. Plumbe's daguerreotypes have more fidelity than any portrait ever put on canvas, and so Briggs's sketches of E. A. Duyckinck ("Tibbings") and the author of Puffer Hopkins ("Ferocious") are as life-like as any portraits in words that have ever been drawn. But the subjects are little and mean, pretending and vulgar. Mr. Briggs would not succeed in delineating a gentleman. And some letters of his in Hiram Fuller's paper, perhaps for the reason that they run through a desert of stupidity,—some letters of his, I say, under the apt signature of "Ferdinand Mendoza Pinto," are decidedly clever as examples of caricature; absurd, of course, but sharply absurd, so that, with a knowledge of their design, one could hardly avoid occasional laughter. I once thought Mr. Briggs could cause laughter only by his efforts at a serious kind of writing.

In connection with Mr. John Bisco, he was the originator of the late *Broadway Journal*, my editorial association with that work not having commenced until the sixth or seventh number, although I wrote for it occasionally from the first. Among the principal papers contributed by Mr. B. were those discussing

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the paintings at the preceding exhibition of the Academy of Fine Arts in New York. I may be permitted to say that there was scarcely a point in his whole series of criticisms on this subject at which I did not radically disagree with him. Whatever taste he has in art is, like his taste in letters, Flemish. There is a portrait painter for whom he has an unlimited admiration. The unfortunate gentleman is Mr. Page.

Mr. Briggs is about five feet six inches in height, somewhat slightly framed, with a sharp, thin face, narrow forehead, nose sufficiently prominent, mouth rather pleasant in expression, eyes not so good, gray and small, although occasionally brilliant. In dress he is apt to affect the artist, felicitating himself especially upon his personal acquaintance with artists and his general connoisseurship. He walks with a quick, nervous step. His address is quite good, frank and insinuating. His conversation has now and then the merit of humor, and more frequently of a smartness, allied to wit, but he has a perfect mania for contradiction, and it is sometimes impossible to utter an uninterrupted sentence in his hearing. He has much warmth of feeling, and is not a person to be disliked, although very apt to irritate and annoy. Two of his most marked characteristics are vacillation of purpose and a passion for being mysterious. He has, apparently, travelled; has some knowledge of French; has been engaged in a variety of employments, and

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now, I believe, occupies a lawyer's office in Nassau Street. He is from Cape Cod or Nantucket, is married, and is the centre of a little circle of rather intellectual people, of which the Kirklands, Lowell, and some other notabilities are honorary members. He goes little into general society, and seems about forty years of age.

WILLIAM KIRKLAND

Mr. William Kirkland, husband of the author of *A New Home*, has written much for the magazines, but has made no collection of his works. A series of *Letters from Abroad* have been among his most popular compositions. He was in Europe for some time, and is well acquainted with the French language and literature, as also with the German. He aided Dr. Turner in the late translation of Von Raumer's *America*, published by the Langleys. One of his best magazine papers appeared in the *Columbian*, a review of the *London Foreign Quarterly* for April, 1844. The arrogance, ignorance, and self-glorification of the *Quarterly*, with its gross injustice toward everything un-British, were severely and palpably exposed, and its narrow malignity shown to be especially *mal-à-propos* in a journal exclusively devoted to foreign concerns, and therefore presumably imbued with something of a cosmopolitan spirit. An

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article on *English and American Monthlies* in *Godey's Magazine* and one entitled *Our English Visitors*, in the *Columbian*, have also been extensively read and admired. A valuable essay on *The Tyranny of Public Opinion in the United States* (published in the *Columbian* for December, 1845), demonstrates the truth of Jefferson's assertion, that in this country, which has set the world an example of physical liberty, the inquisition of popular sentiment overrules in practice the freedom asserted in theory by the laws. *The West, the Paradise of the Poor*, and *The United States Census for 1830*, the former in the *Democratic Review*, the latter in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, with sundry essays in the daily papers, complete the list of Mr. Kirkland's works. It will be seen that he has written little, but that little is entitled to respect for its simplicity and the evidence which it affords of scholarship and diligent research. Whatever Mr. Kirkland does is done carefully. He is occasionally very caustic, but seldom without cause. His style is vigorous, precise, and, notwithstanding his foreign acquirements, free from idiomatic peculiarities.

Mr. Kirkland is beloved by all who know him; in character mild, unassuming, benevolent, yet not without becoming energy at times; in person rather short and slight; features indistinctive; converses well and zealously, although his hearing is defective.

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JOHN W. FRANCIS

Doctor Francis, although by no means a *littérateur*, cannot well be omitted in an account of the New York *littérati*. In his capacity of physician and medical lecturer, he is far too well known to need comment. He was the pupil, friend, and partner of Hossack—the pupil of Abernethy—connected in some manner with everything that has been well said or done medicinally in America. As a medical essayist he has always commanded the highest respect and attention. Among the points he has made at various times, I may mention his anatomy of drunkenness, his views of the Asiatic cholera, his analysis of the Avon waters of the state, his establishment of the comparative immunity of the constitution from a second attack of yellow fever, and his pathological propositions on the changes wrought in the system by specific poisons through their assimilation, propositions remarkably sustained and enforced by recent discoveries of Liebig.

In unprofessional letters Doctor Francis has also accomplished much, although necessarily in a discursive manner. His biography of Chancellor Livingston, his horticultural discourse, his discourse at the opening of the new hall of the New York Lyceum of Natural History, are (each in its way) models of fine writing just sufficiently toned down by an indomitable common

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sense. I had nearly forgotten to mention his admirable sketch of the personal associations of Bishop Berkley, of Newport.

Doctor Francis is one of the old spirits of the New York Historical Society. His philanthropy, his untiring beneficence, will forever render his name a household word among the truly Christian of hearth and home. His professional services and his purse are always at the command of the needy; few of our wealthiest men have ever contributed to the relief of distress so bountifully; none certainly with greater readiness and with warmer sympathy.

His person and manner are richly peculiar. He is short and stout, probably five feet eight in height; his limbs of great muscularity and strength, the whole frame indicating prodigious vitality and energy; the latter is, in fact, the leading trait in his character. His head is large, massive, the features in keeping; complexion dark florid; eyes piercingly bright; mouth exceedingly mobile and expressive; hair gray, as worn in matted locks about the neck and shoulder; eyebrows to correspond, jagged and ponderous. His age is about fifty-eight. His general appearance such as to arrest attention.

His address is the most genial that can be conceived; his *bonhomie* irresistible. He speaks in a loud, clear, hearty tone, dogmatically, with his head thrown back and his chest out; never waits for an introduction to

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anybody; slaps a perfect stranger on the back and calls him "Doctor" or "Learned Theban"; pats every lady on the head, and (if she be pretty and *petite*) designates her by some such title as "My Pocket Edition of the Lives of the Saints." His conversation proper is a sort of Roman punch made up of tragedy, comedy, and the broadest of all possible farce. He has a natural felicitous flow of talk, always over-swelling its boundaries and sweeping everything before it, right and left. He is very earnest, intense, emphatic; thumps the table with his fist; shocks the nerves of the ladies. His *forte*, after all, is humor, the richest conceivable, a compound of Swift, Rabelais, and the clown in the pantomime. He is married.

ANNA CORA MOWATT

Mrs. Mowatt is in some respects a remarkable woman, and has undoubtedly wrought a deeper impression upon the public than any one of her sex in America.

She became first known through her recitations. To these she drew large and discriminating audiences in Boston, New York, and elsewhere to the north and east. Her subjects were much in the usual way of these exhibitions, including comic as well as serious pieces, chiefly in verse. In her selections she evinced no very refined taste, but was probably influenced by the elocutionary rather than by the literary value of

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her programmes. She read well; her voice was melodious; her youth and general appearance excited interest, but, upon the whole, she produced no great effect, and the enterprise may be termed unsuccessful, although the press, as is its wont, spoke in the most sonorous tone of her success.

It was during these recitations that her name, prefixed to occasional tales, sketches, and brief poems in the magazines, first attracted an attention that, but for the recitations, it might not have attracted.

Her sketches and tales may be said to be cleverly written. They are lively, easy, conventional, scintillating with a species of sarcastic wit which might be termed good were it in any respect original. In point of style, that is to say, of mere English, they are very respectable. One of the best of her prose pieces is entitled *Ennui and Its Antidote*, published in the *Columbian Magazine* for June, 1845. The subject, however, is an exceedingly hackneyed one.

In looking carefully over her poems, I find no one entitled to commendation as a whole; in very few of them do I observe even noticeable passages, and I confess that I am surprised and disappointed at this result of my inquiry; nor can I make up my mind that there is not much latent poetical power in Mrs. Mowatt. From some lines addressed to Isabel M——, I copy the opening stanza as the most favorable specimen which I have seen of her verse:

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Forever vanished from thy cheek
Is life's unfolding rose;
Forever quenched the flashing smile
That conscious beauty knows!
Thine orbs are lustrous with a light
Which ne'er illumines the eye
Till heaven is bursting on the sight
And earth is fleeting by.

In this there is much force, and the idea in the concluding quatrain is so well put as to have the air of originality. Indeed, I am not sure that the thought of the last two lines is not original; at all events it is exceedingly natural and impressive. I say "natural," because, in any imagined ascent from the orb we inhabit, when heaven should "burst on the sight," in other words, when the attraction of the planet should be superseded by that of another sphere, then instantly would the "earth" have the appearance of "fleeting by." The versification, also, is much better here than is usual with the poetess. In general she is rough, through excess of harsh consonants. The whole poem is of higher merit than any which I can find with her name attached; but there is little of the spirit of poesy in anything she writes. She evinces more feeling than ideality.

Her first decided success was with her comedy, *Fashion*, although much of this success itself is referable to the interest felt in her as a beautiful woman and an authoress.

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The play is not without merit. It may be commended especially for its simplicity of plot. What the Spanish playwrights mean by dramas of intrigue are the worst acting dramas in the world; the intellect of an audience can never safely be fatigued by complexity. The necessity for verbose explanation, however, on the part of Trueman, at the close of the play, is in this regard a serious defect. A *dénouement* should in all cases be taken up with action, with nothing else. Whatever cannot be explained by such action should be communicated at the opening of the story.

In the plot, however estimable for simplicity, there is, of course, not a particle of originality of invention. Had it, indeed, been designed as a burlesque upon the arrant conventionality of stage incidents in general, it might have been received as a palpable hit. There is not an event, a character, a jest, which is not a well-understood thing, a matter of course, a stage-property time out of mind. The general tone is adopted from *The School for Scandal*, to which, indeed, the whole composition bears just such an affinity as the shell of a locust to the locust that tenants it, as the spectrum of a Congreve rocket to the Congreve rocket itself. In the management of her imitation, nevertheless, Mrs. Mowatt has, I think, evinced a sense of theatrical effect or point which may lead her, at no very distant day, to compose an exceedingly taking, although it can never much aid her in composing a very meritorious,

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drama. *Fashion*, in a word, owes what it had of success to its being the work of a lovely woman who had already excited interest, and to the very common-placeness or spirit of conventionality which rendered it readily comprehensible and appreciable by the public proper. It was much indebted, too, to the carpets, the ottomans, the chandeliers, and the conservatories, which gained so decided a popularity for that despicable mass of inanity, the *London Assurance* of Boucicault.

Since *Fashion*, Mrs. Mowatt has published one or two brief novels in pamphlet form, but they have no particular merit, although they afford glimpses (I cannot help thinking) of a genius as yet unrevealed, except in her capacity of actress.

In this capacity, if she be but true to herself, she will assuredly win a very enviable distinction. She has done well, wonderfully well, both in tragedy and comedy; but if she knew her own strength, she would confine herself nearly altogether to the depicting (in letters not less than on the stage) the more gentle sentiments and the most profound passions. Her sympathy with the latter is evidently intense. In the utterance of the truly generous, of the really noble, of the unaffectedly passionate, we see her bosom heave, her cheek grow pale, her limbs tremble, her lip quiver, and nature's own tear rush impetuously to the eye. It is this freshness of the heart which will provide for her the greenest laurels. It is this enthusiasm,

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this well of deep feeling, which should be made to prove for her an inexhaustible source of fame. As an actress, it is to her a mine of wealth worth all the dawdling instruction in the world. Mrs. Mowatt, on her first appearance as Pauline, was quite as able to give lessons in stage routine to any actor or actress in America as was any actor or actress to give lessons to her. Now, at least, she should throw all "support" to the winds, trust proudly to her own sense of art, her own rich and natural elocution, her beauty, which is unusual, her grace, which is queenly, and be assured that these qualities, as she now possesses them, are all sufficient to render her a great actress, when considered simply as the means by which the end of natural acting is to be attained, as the mere instruments by which she may effectively and unimpededly lay bare to the audience the movements of her own passionate heart.

Indeed, the great charm of her manner is its naturalness. She looks, speaks, and moves with a well-controlled impulsiveness, as different as can be conceived from the customary rant and cant, the hack conventionality of the stage. Her voice is rich and voluminous, and although by no means powerful, is so well managed as to seem so. Her utterance is singularly distinct, its sole blemish being an occasional Anglicism of accent, adopted probably from her instructor, Mr. Crisp. Her reading could scarcely be improved. Her

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action is distinguished by an ease and self-possession which would do credit to a veteran. Her step is the perfection of grace. Often have I watched her for hours with the closest scrutiny, yet never for an instant did I observe her in an attitude of the least awkwardness or even constraint, while many of her seemingly impulsive gestures spoke in loud terms of the woman of genius, of the poet imbued with the profoundest sentiment of the beautiful in motion.

Her figure is slight, even fragile. Her face is a remarkably fine one, and of that precise character best adapted to the stage. The forehead is, perhaps, the least prepossessing feature, although it is by no means an unintellectual one. Hair light auburn, in rich profusion, and always arranged with exquisite taste. The eyes are gray, brilliant, and expressive, without being full. The nose is well formed, with the Roman curve, and indicative of energy. This quality is also shown in the somewhat excessive prominence of the chin. The mouth is large, with brilliant and even teeth and flexible lips, capable of the most instantaneous and effective variation of expression. A more radiantly beautiful smile it is quite impossible to conceive.

GEORGE B. CHEEVER

The Reverend George B. Cheever created at one time something of an excitement by the publication of a little brochure entitled *Deacon Giles' Distillery*. He is

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much better known, however, as the editor of *The Commonplace Book of American Poetry*, a work which has at least the merit of not belying its title, and is exceedingly commonplace. I am ashamed to say that for several years this compilation afforded to Europeans the only material from which it was possible to form an estimate of the poetical ability of Americans. The selections appear to me exceedingly injudicious, and have all a marked leaning to the didactic. Dr. Cheever is not without a certain sort of negative ability as critic, but works of this character should be undertaken by poets or not at all. The verses which I have seen attributed to him are undeniably *médiocres*.

His principal publications, in addition to those mentioned above, are *God's Hand in America*, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim under the Shadow of Mount Blanc*, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim under the Shadow of Jungfrau*, and, lately, a *Defence of Capital Punishment*. This *Defence* is at many points well reasoned, and as a clear *résumé* of all that has been already said on its own side of the question, may be considered as commendable. Its premises, however, (as well as those of all reasoners *pro* or *con* on this vexed topic,) are admitted only very partially by the world at large,—a fact of which the author affects to be ignorant. Neither does he make the slightest attempt at bringing forward one novel argument. Any man of ordinary invention might have adduced and maintained a dozen.

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The two series of *Wanderings* are, perhaps, the best works of their writer. They are what is called "eloquent"; a little too much in that way, perhaps, but nevertheless entertaining.

CHARLES ANTHON

Doctor Charles Anthon is the well-known Jay-Professor of the Greek and Latin languages in Columbia College, New York, and Rector of the Grammar School. If not absolutely the best, he is at least generally considered the best, classicist in America. In England, and in Europe at large, his scholastic acquirements are more sincerely respected than those of any of our countrymen. His additions to Lemprière are there justly regarded as evincing a nice perception of method, and accurate as well as extensive erudition, but his *Classical Dictionary* has superseded the work of the Frenchman altogether. Most of Professor Anthon's publications have been adopted as text-books at Oxford and Cambridge, an honor to be properly understood only by those acquainted with the many high requisites for attaining it. As a commentator (if not exactly as a critic) he may rank with any of his day, and has evinced powers very unusual in men who devote their lives to classical lore. His accuracy is very remarkable; in this particular he is always to be relied upon. The trait manifests itself even in his

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MS., which is a model of neatness and symmetry, exceeding in these respects anything of the kind with which I am acquainted. It is somewhat too neat, perhaps, and too regular, as well as diminutive, to be called beautiful; it might be mistaken at any time, however, for very elaborate copperplate engraving.

But his chirography, although fully in keeping, so far as precision is concerned, with his mental character, is, in its entire freedom from flourish or superfluity, as much out of keeping with his verbal style. In his notes to the classics he is singularly Ciceronian, if, indeed, not positively Johnsonese.

An attempt was made not long ago to prepossess the public against his *Classical Dictionary*, the most important of his works, by getting up a hue and cry of plagiarism, in the case of all similar books the most preposterous accusation in the world, although, from its very preposterousness, one not easily rebutted. Obviously, the design in any such compilation is, in the first place, to make a useful school-book or book of reference, and the scholar who should be weak enough to neglect this indispensable point for the mere purpose of winning credit with a few bookish men for originality would deserve to be dubbed, by the public at least, a dunce. There are very few points of classical scholarship which are not the common property of "the learned" throughout the world, and in composing any book of reference recourse is un-

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scrupulously and even necessarily had in all cases to similar books which have preceded. In availing themselves of these latter, however, it is the practice of quacks to paraphrase page after page, rearranging the order of paragraphs, making a slight alteration in point of fact here and there, but preserving the spirit of the whole, its information, erudition, etc., etc., while everything is so completely rewritten as to leave no room for a direct charge of plagiarism; and this is considered and lauded as originality. Now, he who, in availing himself of the labors of his predecessors (and it is clear that all scholars must avail themselves of such labors)—he who shall copy verbatim the passages to be desired, without attempt at palming off their spirit as original with himself, is certainly no plagiarist, even if he fail to make direct acknowledgment of indebtedness—is unquestionably less of the plagiarist than the disingenuous and contemptible quack who wriggles himself, as above explained, into a reputation for originality, a reputation quite out of place in a case of this kind, the public, of course, never caring a straw whether he be original or not. These attacks upon the New York professor are to be attributed to a clique of pedants in and about Boston, gentlemen envious of his success, and whose own compilations are noticeable only for the singular patience and ingenuity with which their dovetailing chicanery is concealed from the public eye.

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Doctor Anthon is, perhaps, forty-eight years of age; about five feet eight inches in height; rather stout; fair complexion; hair light and inclined to curl; forehead remarkably broad and high; eye gray, clear, and penetrating; mouth well-formed, with excellent teeth, the lips having great flexibility, and consequent power of expression; the smile particularly pleasing. His address in general is bold, frank, cordial, full of *bon-homie*. His whole air is *distingué* in the best understanding of the term; that is to say, he would impress any one at first sight with the idea of his being no ordinary man. He has qualities, indeed, which would have assured him eminent success in almost any pursuit; and there are times in which his friends are half disposed to regret his exclusive devotion to classical literature. He was one of the originators of the late *New York Review*, his associates in the conduct and proprietorship being Doctor F. L. Hawks and Professor R. C. Henry. By far the most valuable papers, however, were those of Doctor A.

RALPH HOYT

The Reverend Ralph Hoyt is known chiefly, at least to the world of letters, by *The Chaunt of Life and Other Poems, with Sketches and Essays*. The publication of this work, however, was never completed, only a portion of the poems having appeared, and none of the

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essays or sketches. It is hoped that we shall yet have these latter.

Of the poems issued, one, entitled *Old*, had so many peculiar excellences that I copied the whole of it, although quite long, in *The Broadway Journal*. It will remind every reader of Durand's fine picture, *An Old Man's Recollections*, although between poem and painting there is no more than a very admissible similarity.

I quote a stanza from *Old* (the opening one) by way of bringing the piece to the remembrance of any who may have forgotten it:

By the wayside, on a mossy stone,
Sat a hoary pilgrim sadly musing;
Oft I marked him sitting there alone,
All the landscape like a page perusing;
Poor unknown,
By the wayside, on a mossy stone.

The quaintness aimed at here is, so far as a single stanza is concerned, to be defended as a legitimate effect, conferring high pleasure on a numerous and cultivated class of minds. Mr. Hoyt, however, in his continuous and uniform repetition of the first line in the last of each stanza of twenty-five, has by much exceeded the proper limits of the quaint and impinged upon the ludicrous. The poem, nevertheless, abounds in lofty merit, and has, in especial, some passages of rich imagination and exquisite pathos. For example:

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Seemed it pitiful he should sit there,
No one sympathizing, no one heeding,
None to love him for his thin gray hair.

One sweet spirit broke the silent spell—
Ah, to me her name was always Heaven!
She besought him all his grief to tell—
(I was then thirteen and she eleven)—
Isabel!
One sweet spirit broke the silent spell.

"Angel," said he, sadly, "I am old;
Earthly hope no longer hath a morrow;
Why I sit here thou shalt soon be told"—
Then his eye betrayed a pearl of sorrow,—
Down it rolled—
"Angel," said he, sadly, "I am old!"

It must be confessed that some portions of *Old* (which is by far the best of the collection) remind us forcibly of the *Old Man* of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Præmusa is the concluding poem of the volume, and itself concludes with an exceedingly vigorous stanza, putting me not a little in mind of Campbell in his best days:

O'er all the silent sky
A dark and scowling frown—
But darker scowled each eye
When all resolved to die—
When (night of dread renown!)
A thousand stars went down.

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Mr. Hoyt is about forty years of age, of the medium height, pale complexion, dark hair and eyes. His countenance expresses sensibility and benevolence. He converses slowly and with perfect deliberation. He is married.

GULIAN C. VERPLANCK

Mr. Verplanck has acquired reputation, at least his literary reputation, less from what he has done than from what he has given indication of ability to do. His best, if not his principal works, have been addresses, orations, and contributions to the reviews. His scholarship is more than respectable, and his taste and acumen are not to be disputed.

His legal acquirements, it is admitted, are very considerable. When in Congress he was noted as the most industrious man in that assembly, and acted as a walking register or volume of reference, ever at the service of that class of legislators who are too lofty-minded to burden their memories with mere business particulars or matters of fact. Of late years the energy of his character appears to have abated, and many of his friends go so far as to accuse him of indolence.

His family is quite influential, one of the few old Dutch ones retaining their social position.

Mr. Verplanck is short in stature, not more than five

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feet five inches in height, and compactly or stoutly built. The head is square, massive, and covered with thick, bushy, and grizzly hair; the cheeks are ruddy; lips red and full, indicating a relish for good cheer; nose short and straight; eyebrows much arched; eyes dark blue, with what seems, to a casual glance, a sleepy expression, but they gather light and fire as we examine them.

He must be sixty, but a vigorous constitution gives promise of a ripe and healthful old age. He is active; walks firmly, with a short, quick step. His manner is affable, or (more accurately) sociable. He converses well, although with no great fluency, and has his hobbies of talk; is especially fond of old English literature. Altogether, his person, intellect, tastes, and general peculiarities bear a very striking resemblance to those of the late Nicholas Biddle.

FREEMAN HUNT

Mr. Hunt is editor and proprietor of the well-known *Merchants' Magazine*, one of the most useful of our monthly journals, and decidedly the best "property" of any work of its class. In its establishment he evinced many remarkable traits of character. He was entirely without means, and even much in debt, and otherwise embarrassed, when by one of those intuitive perceptions which belong only to genius, but which are usually at-

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tributed to "good luck," the "happy" idea entered his head of getting up a magazine devoted to the interests of the influential class of merchants. The chief happiness of this idea, however (which no doubt had been entertained and discarded by a hundred projectors before Mr. H.), consisted in the method by which he proposed to carry it into operation. Neglecting the hackneyed modes of advertising largely, circulating flashy prospectuses and sending out numerous "agents," who, in general, merely serve the purpose of boring people into a very temporary support of the work in whose behalf they are employed, he took the whole matter resolutely into his own hands; called personally, in the first place, upon his immediate mercantile friends; explained to them frankly and succinctly his object; put the value and necessity of the contemplated publication in the best light, as he well knew how to do, and in this manner obtained to head his subscription list a good many of the most eminent business men in New York. Armed with their names and with recommendatory letters from many of them, he now pushed on to the other chief cities of the Union, and thus, in less time than is taken by ordinary men to make a preparatory flourish of trumpets, succeeded in building up for himself a permanent fortune, and for the public a journal of immense interest and value. In the whole proceeding he evinced a tact, a knowledge of mankind, and a self-dependence which

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are the staple of even greater achievements than the establishment of a five-dollar magazine. In the subsequent conduct of the work he gave evidence of equal ability. Having without aid put the magazine upon a satisfactory footing as regards its circulation, he also without aid undertook its editorial and business conduct, from the first germ of the conception to the present moment having kept the whole undertaking within his own hands. His subscribers and regular contributors are now among the most intelligent and influential in America; the journal is regarded as absolute authority in mercantile matters, circulates extensively not only in this country, but in Europe, and even in regions more remote, affording its worthy and enterprising projector a large income, which no one knows better than himself how to put to good use.

The strong points, the marked peculiarities of Mr. Hunt could not have failed in arresting the attention of all observers of character; and Mr. Willis in especial has made him the subject of repeated comment. I copy what follows from the New York *Mirror*:

“Hunt has been glorified in the *Hong-Kong Gazette*, is regularly complimented by the English mercantile authorities, has every bank in the world for an eager subscriber, every consul, every ship owner and navigator; is filed away as authority in every library, and thought of in half the countries of the world as early as

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No. 3 in their enumeration of distinguished Americans; yet who seeks to do him honor in the city he does honor to? The *Merchants' Magazine*, though a prodigy of perseverance and industry, is not an accidental development of Hunt's energies. He has always been singularly sagacious and original in devising new works and good ones. He was the founder of the first *Ladies' Magazine*,¹ of the first children's periodical; he started the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, compiled the best-known collection of American anecdotes, and is an indefatigable writer, the author, among other things, of *Letters About the Hudson*.

"Hunt was a playfellow of ours in round-jacket days, and we have always looked at him with a reminiscent interest. His luminous, eager eyes, as he goes along the street, keenly bent on his errand, would impress any observer with an idea of his genius and determination, and we think it quite time his earnest head was in the engraver's hand, and his daily passing by a mark for the *digito monstrari*. Few more worthy or more valuable citizens are among us."

Much of Mr. Hunt's character is included in what I have already said and quoted. He is "earnest," "eager," combining in a very singular manner general coolness and occasional excitability. He is a true

¹ At this point Mr. Willis is, perhaps, in error.

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friend, and the enemy of no man. His heart is full of the warmest sympathies and charities. No one in New York is more universally popular.

He is about five feet eight inches in height, well proportioned; complexion dark-florid; forehead capacious; chin massive and projecting, indicative (according to Lavater and general experience) of that energy which is, in fact, the chief point of his character; hair light brown, very fine, of a web-like texture, worn long and floating about the face; eyes of wonderful brilliancy and intensity of expression; the whole countenance beaming with sensibility and intelligence. He is married and about thirty-eight years of age.

PIERO MARONCELLI

During his twelve years' imprisonment, Maroncelli composed a number of poetical works, some of which were committed to paper, others lost for the want of it. In this country he has published a volume entitled *Additions to the Memoirs of Silvio Pellico*, containing numerous anecdotes of the captivity not recorded in Pellico's work, and an *Essay on the Classic and Romantic Schools*, the author proposing to divide them anew and designate them by novel distinctions. There is at least some scholarship and some originality in this essay. It is also brief. Maroncelli regards it as the best of his compositions. It is strongly tinctured with transcendentalism. The volume contains, like-

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wise, some poems, of which the *Psalm of Life* and the *Psalm of the Dawn* have never been translated into English. *Winds of the Wakened Spring*, one of the pieces included, has been happily rendered by Mr. Halleck, and is the most favorable specimen that could have been selected. These *Additions* accompanied a Boston version of *My Prisons*, by Silvio Pellico.

Maroncelli is now about fifty years old, and bears on his person the marks of long suffering; he has lost a leg; his hair and beard became gray many years ago; just now he is suffering from severe illness, and from this it can scarcely be expected that he will recover.

In figure he is short and slight. His forehead is rather low, but broad. His eyes are light blue and weak. The nose and mouth are large. His features in general have all the Italian mobility; their expression is animated and full of intelligence. He speaks hurriedly and gesticulates to excess. He is irritable, frank, generous, chivalrous, warmly attached to his friends, and expecting from them equal devotion. His love of country is unbounded, and he is quite enthusiastic in his endeavors to circulate in America the literature of Italy.

LAUGHTON OSBORN

Personally, Mr. Osborn is little known as an author, either to the public or in literary society, but he has

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made a great many "sensations" anonymously, or with a *nom de plume*. I am not sure that he has published anything with his own name.

One of his earliest works, if not his earliest, was *The Adventures of Jeremy Levis, by Himself*, in one volume, a kind of medley of fact, fiction, satire, criticism, and novel philosophy. It is a dashing, reckless *brochure*, brimful of talent and audacity. Of course it was covertly admired by the few, and loudly condemned by all of the many who can fairly be said to have seen it at all. It had no great circulation. There was something wrong, I fancy, in the mode of its issue.

Jeremy Levis was followed by *The Dream of Alla-Ad-Deen, from the romance of "Anastasia," by Charles Erskine White, D.D.* This is a thin pamphlet of thirty-two pages, each page containing about one hundred and forty words. Alla-Ad-Deen is the son of Aladdin of "wonderful lamp" memory, and the story is in the *Vision of Mirza* or *Rasselas* way. The design is to reconcile us to death and evil, on the somewhat unphilosophical ground that, comparatively, we are of little importance in the scale of creation. The author himself supposes this scale to be infinite, and thus his argument proves too much; for if evil should be regarded by man as of no consequence because, "comparatively," he is of none, it must be regarded as of no consequence by the angels for a similar reason, and so on in a never-ending ascent. In other

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words, the only thing proved is the rather bull-ish proposition that evil is no evil at all. I do not find that the *Dream* elicited any attention. It would have been more appropriately published in one of our magazines.

Next in order came, I believe, *The Confessions of a Poet, by Himself*. This was in two volumes, of the ordinary novel form, but printed very openly. It made much noise in the literary world, and no little curiosity was excited in regard to its author, who was generally supposed to be John Neal. There were some grounds for this supposition, the tone and matter of the narrative bearing much resemblance to those of *Errata* and *Seventy-Six*, especially in the points of boldness and vigor. The *Confessions*, however, far surpassed any production of Mr. Neal's in a certain air of cultivation (if not exactly of scholarship) which pervaded it, as well as in the management of its construction, a particular in which the author of *The Battle of Niagara* invariably fails; there is no precision, no finish, about anything he does—always an excessive force, but little of refined art. Mr. N. seems to be deficient in a sense of completeness. He begins well, vigorously, startlingly, and proceeds by fits, quite at random, now prosing, now exciting vivid interest, but his conclusions are sure to be hurried and indistinct, so that the reader perceives a falling off, and closes the book with dissatisfaction. He has done nothing which, as a whole, is even respectable, and the *Confessions* are

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quite remarkable for their artistic unity and perfection. But in higher regards they are to be commended. I do not think, indeed, that a better book of its kind has been written in America. To be sure, it is not precisely the work to place in the hands of a lady, but its scenes of passion are intensely wrought, its incidents are striking and original, its sentiments audacious and suggestive at least, if not at all times tenable. In a word, it is that rare thing, a fiction of power without rudeness. Its spirit, in general, resembles that of *Miserrimus* and *Martin Faber*.

Partly on account of what most persons would term their licentiousness, partly, also, on account of the prevalent idea that Mr. Neal (who was never very popular with the press) had written them, the *Confessions*, by the newspapers, were most unscrupulously misrepresented and abused. The *Commercial Advertiser* of New York, was, it appears, foremost in condemnation, and Mr. Osborn thought proper to avenge his wrongs by the publication of a bulky satirical poem levelled at the critics in general, but more especially at Colonel Stone, the editor of the *Commercial*. This satire (which was published in exquisite style as regards print and paper) was entitled *The Vision of Rubeta*. Owing to the high price necessarily set upon the book, no great many copies were sold, but the few that got into circulation made quite a hubbub, and with reason, for the satire was not only bitter but

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personal in the last degree. It was, moreover, very censurably indecent; filthy is, perhaps, the more appropriate word. The press, without exception, or nearly so, condemned it in loud terms, without taking the trouble to investigate its pretensions as a literary work. But as *The Confessions of a Poet* was one of the best novels of its kind ever written in this country, so *The Vision of Rubeta* was decidedly the best satire. For its vulgarity and gross personality there is no defence, but its mordacity cannot be gainsaid. In calling it, however, the best American satire, I do not intend any excessive commendation; for it is, in fact, the only satire composed by an American. Trumbull's clumsy work is nothing at all, and then we have Halleck's *Croakers*, which is very feeble, but what is there besides? The *Vision* is our best satire, and still a sadly deficient one. It was bold enough and bitter enough, and well constructed and decently versified, but it failed in sarcasm because its malignity was permitted to render itself evident. The author is never very severe, because he is never sufficiently cool. We laugh not so much at the objects of his satire as we do at himself for getting into so great a passion. But, perhaps, under no circumstances is wit the forte of Mr. Osborn. He has few equals at downright invective.

The *Vision* was succeeded by *Arthur Carryl and Other Poems*, including an additional canto of the

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satire, and several happy although not in all cases accurate or comprehensive imitations in English of the Greek and Roman metres. *Arthur Carryl* is a fragment, in the manner of *Don Juan*. I do not think it especially meritorious. It has, however, a truth-telling and discriminative preface, and its notes are well worthy perusal. Some opinions embraced in these latter on the topic of versification I have examined in one of the series of articles called *Marginalia*.

I am not aware that since *Arthur Carryl* Mr. Osborn has written anything more than a *Treatise on Oil Painting*, issued not long ago by Messrs. Wiley & Putnam. This work is highly spoken of by those well qualified to judge, but is, I believe, principally a compilation or compendium.

In personal character, Mr. O. is one of the most remarkable men I ever yet had the pleasure of meeting. He is undoubtedly one of "Nature's own noblemen," full of generosity, courage, honor; chivalrous in every respect, but, unhappily, carrying his ideas of chivalry, or rather of independence, to the point of Quixotism, if not of absolute insanity. He has no doubt been misapprehended, and therefore wronged, by the world; but he should not fail to remember that the source of the wrong lay in his own idiosyncrasy, one altogether unintelligible and unappreciable by the mass of mankind.

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He is a member of one of the oldest and most influential, formerly one of the wealthiest, families in New York. His acquirements and accomplishments are many and unusual. As poet, painter, and musician he has succeeded nearly equally well, and absolutely succeeded as each. His scholarship is extensive. In the French and Italian languages he is quite at home, and in everything he is thorough and accurate. His critical abilities are to be highly respected, although he is apt to swear somewhat too roundly by Johnson and Pope. Imagination is not Mr. Osborn's *forte*.

He is about thirty-two or three, certainly not more than thirty-five years of age. In person he is well made, probably five feet ten or eleven, muscular, and active. Hair, eyes, and complexion, rather light; fine teeth; the whole expression of the countenance manly, frank, and prepossessing in the highest degree.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK

The name of Halleck is at least as well established in the poetical world as that of any American. Our principal poets are, perhaps, most frequently named in this order: Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Sprague, Longfellow, Willis, and so on, Halleck coming second in the series, but holding, in fact, a rank in the public opinion quite equal to that of Bryant. The accuracy of the arrangement as above made may, indeed, be

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questioned. For my own part, I should have it thus: Longfellow, Bryant, Halleck, Willis, Sprague, Dana; and, recognizing rather the poetic capacity than the poems actually accomplished, there are three or four comparatively unknown writers whom I would place in the series between Bryant and Halleck, while there are about a dozen whom I should assign a position between Willis and Sprague. Two dozen at least might find room between Sprague and Dana; this latter, I fear, owing a very large portion of his reputation to his *quondam* editorial connection with the *North American Review*. One or two poets, now in my mind's eye, I should have no hesitation in posting above even Mr. Longfellow, still not intending this as very extravagant praise.

It is noticeable, however, that, in the arrangement which I attribute to the popular understanding, the order observed is nearly, if not exactly, that of the ages, the poetic ages, of the individual poets. Those rank first who were first known. The priority has established the strength of impression. Nor is this result to be accounted for by mere reference to the old saw, that first impressions are the strongest. Gratitude, surprise, and a species of hyper-patriotic triumph have been blended, and finally confounded with admiration or appreciation in regard to the pioneers of American literature, among whom there is not one whose productions have not been grossly overrated by

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In the first part, I should like to mention Halleck, Wallcut, and Dana, and Sprague, and Fitz-Greene Halleck, and the poetical capacity of the first three. In the second, there are three or four poets known to me, of whom I would like to mention Bryant and Halleck, while there are a number of whom I should assign a position, but will not name. Two dozen at least I find between Sprague and Dana; and I should like a very large portion of this list to have no editorial connection with the *American Review*. One or two poets, now in the hands of Fitz-Greene Halleck, and, in the hands of my eye, I should have no hesitation in placing them in the second volume, still not intending that they should have a great deal of praise.

It is noticeable, however, that, in the arrangement of the literature, I adhere to the popular understanding of the order of service is nearly, if not exactly, that of the order of the poets. The poets who were first known. The priority of the poets is the strength of impression. Nor is this result to be accounted for by mere reference to the fact, that first impressions are the strongest. It is a result, I think, of a species of hyper-patriotic feeling, which has been included, and finally confounded with a feeling of appreciation in regard to the poets of the American literature, among whom there is a number of whose productions have not been grossly overrated.



Fitz. Greene Halleck

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his countrymen. Hitherto we have been in no mood to view with calmness and discuss with discrimination the real claims of the few who were first in convincing the mother country that her sons were not all brainless, as at one period she half affected and wholly wished to believe. Is there any one so blind as not to see that Mr. Cooper, for example, owes much, and Mr. Paulding nearly all, of his reputation as a novelist to his early occupation of the field? Is there any one so dull as not to know that fictions which neither of these gentlemen could have written are written daily by native authors, without attracting much more of commendation than can be included in a newspaper paragraph? And, again, is there any one so prejudiced as not to acknowledge that all this happens because there is no longer either reason or wit in the query, "Who reads an American book?"

I mean to say, of course, that Mr. Halleck, in the apparent public estimate, maintains a somewhat better position than that to which, on absolute grounds, he is entitled. There is something, too, in the *bonhomie* of certain of his compositions, something altogether distinct from poetic merit, which has aided to establish him; and much, also, must be admitted on the score of his personal popularity, which is deservedly great. With all these allowances, however, there will still be found a large amount of poetical fame to which he is fairly entitled.

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He has written very little, although he began at an early age, when quite a boy, indeed. His "juvenile" works, however, have been kept very judiciously from the public eye. Attention was first called to him by his satires, signed "Croaker" and "Croaker & Co.," published in the New York *Evening Post*, in 1819. Of these the pieces with the signature "Croaker & Co." were the joint work of Halleck and his friend Drake. The political and personal features of these *jeux d'esprit* gave them a consequence and a notoriety to which they are entitled on no other account. They are not without a species of drollery, but are loosely and no doubt carelessly written.

Neither was *Fanny*, which closely followed the *Croakers*, constructed with any great deliberation. "It was printed," say the ordinary memoirs, "within three weeks from its commencement;" but the truth is, that a couple of days would have been an ample allowance of time for any such composition. If we except a certain gentlemanly ease and insouciance, with some fancy of illustration, there is really very little about this poem to be admired. There has been no positive avowal of its authorship, although there can be no doubt of its having been written by Halleck. He, I presume, does not esteem it very highly. It is a mere extravaganza, in close imitation of *Don Juan*, a vehicle for squibs at contemporary persons and things.

Our poet, indeed, seems to have been much im-

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pressed by *Don Juan*, and attempts to engraft its farcicalities even upon the grace and delicacy of *Alnwick Castle*, as, for example, in—

Men in the coal and cattle line,
From Teviot's hard and hero land,
From royal Berwick's beach of sand,
From Wooler, Morpeth, Hexham, and
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

These things may lay claim to oddity, but no more. They are totally out of keeping with the tone of the sweet poem into which they are thus clumsily introduced, and serve no other purpose than to deprive it of all unity of effect. If a poet must be farcical, let him be just that; he can be nothing better at the same moment. To be drolly sentimental, or even sentimentally droll, is intolerable to men and gods and columns.

Alnwick Castle is distinguished, in general, by that air of quiet grace, both in thought and expression, which is the prevailing feature of the Muse of Halleck. Its second stanza is a good specimen of this manner. The commencement of the fourth belongs to a very high order of poetry.

Wild roses by the Abbey towers
Are gay in their young bud and bloom—
They were born of a race of funeral flowers
That garlanded, in long-gone hours,
A Templar's knightly tomb.

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This is gloriously imaginative, and the effect is singularly increased by the sudden transition from iam-buses to anapæsts. The passage is, I think, the noblest to be found in Halleck, and I would be at a loss to discover its parallel in all American poetry.

Marco Bozzaris has much lyrical, without any great amount of ideal, beauty. Force is its prevailing feature,—force resulting rather from well-ordered metre, vigorous rhythm, and a judicious disposal of the circumstances of the poem, than from any of the true lyric material. I should do my conscience great wrong were I to speak of *Marco Bozzaris* as it is the fashion to speak of it, at least in print. Even as a lyric or ode it is surpassed by many American and a multitude of foreign compositions of a similar character.

Burns has numerous passages exemplifying its author's felicity of expression; as, for instance,

Such graves as his are pilgrim shrines,
Shrines to no code or creed confined—
The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Meccas of the mind.

And, again:

There have been loftier themes than his,
And longer scrolls, and louder lyres,
And lays lit up with Poesy's
Purer and holier fires.

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But to the sentiment involved in this last quatrain I feel disposed to yield an assent more thorough than might be expected. Burns, indeed, was the puppet of circumstance. As a poet, no person on the face of the earth has been more extravagantly, more absurdly overrated.

The Poet's Daughter is one of the most characteristic works of Halleck, abounding in his most distinctive traits—grace, expression, repose, insouciance. The vulgarity of

I 'm busy in the cotton trade
And sugar line,

has, I rejoice to see, been omitted in the late editions. The eleventh stanza is certainly not English as it stands, and, besides, is quite unintelligible. What is the meaning of this?—

But her who asks, though first among
The good, the beautiful, the young,
The birthright of a spell more strong
Than these have brought her.

The *Lines on the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake* is, as a whole, one of the best poems of its author. Its simplicity and delicacy of sentiment will recommend it to all readers. It is, however, carelessly written, and the first quatrain,

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Green be the turf above thee,
Friend of my better days;
None knew thee but to love thee,
Nor named thee but to praise,

although beautiful, bears too close a resemblance to the still more beautiful lines of Wordsworth:

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

In versification Mr. Halleck is much as usual, although in this regard Mr. Bryant has paid him numerous compliments. *Marco Bozzaris* has certainly some vigor of rhythm, but its author, in short, writes carelessly, loosely, and, as a matter of course, seldom effectively, so far as the outworks of literature are concerned.

Of late days he has nearly given up the Muses, and we recognize his existence as a poet chiefly by occasional translations from the Spanish or German.

Personally, he is a man to be admired, respected, but more especially beloved. His address has all the captivating *bonhomie* which is the leading feature of his poetry, and, indeed, of his whole moral nature. With his friends he is all ardor, enthusiasm, and cordiality, but to the world at large he is reserved, shunning society, into which he is seduced only with

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difficulty, and upon rare occasions. The love of solitude seems to have become with him a passion.

He is a good modern linguist, and an excellent belles-lettres scholar; in general, has read a great deal, although very discursively. He is what the world calls *ultra* in most of his opinions, more particularly about literature and politics, and is fond of broaching and supporting paradoxes. He converses fluently with animation and zeal; is choice and accurate in his language, exceedingly quick at repartee, and apt at anecdote. His manners are courteous, with dignity and a little tincture of Gallicism. His age is about fifty. In height he is probably five feet seven. He has been stout, but may now be called well-proportioned. His forehead is a noble one, broad, massive, and intellectual, a little bald about the temples; eyes dark and brilliant, but not large; nose Grecian; chin prominent; mouth finely chiselled and full of expression, although the lips are thin; his smile is peculiarly sweet.

In *Graham's Magazine* for September, 1843, there appeared an engraving of Mr. Halleck from a painting by Inman. The likeness conveys a good general idea of the man, but is far too stout and youthful-looking for his appearance at present.

His usual pursuits have been commercial, but he is now the principal superintendent of the business of Mr. John Jacob Astor. He is unmarried.

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ANN S. STEPHENS

Mrs. Stephens has made no collection of her works, but has written much for the magazines, and well. Her compositions have been brief tales with occasional poems. She made her first "sensation" in obtaining a premium of four hundred dollars, offered for "the best prose story" by some one of our journals, her *Mary Derwent* proving the successful article. The amount of the prize, however,—a much larger one than it has been the custom to offer,—had more to do with the *éclat* of the success than had the positive merit of the tale, although this is very considerable. She has subsequently written several better things; *Malina Gray*, for example, *Alice Copley*, and *The Two Dukes*. These are on serious subjects. In comic ones she has comparatively failed. She is fond of the bold, striking, trenchant, in a word, of the melodramatic; has a quick appreciation of the picturesque, and is not unskilful in delineations of character. She seizes adroitly on salient incidents and presents them with vividness to the eye, but in their combinations or adaptations she is by no means so thoroughly at home; that is to say, her plots are not so good as are their individual items. Her style is what the critics usually term "powerful," but lacks real power through its verboseness and floridity. It is, in fact, generally turgid, even bombastic, involved, needlessly parenthetical,

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and superabundant in epithets, although these latter are frequently well chosen. Her sentences are also, for the most part, too long; we forget their commencements ere we get at their terminations. Her faults, nevertheless, both in matter and manner, belong to the effervescence of high talent, if not exactly of genius.

Of Mrs. Stephens's poetry I have seen so very little that I feel myself scarcely in condition to speak of it.

She began her literary life, I believe, by editing *The Portland Magazine*, and has since been announced as editress of *The Ladies' Companion*, a monthly journal published some years ago in New York, and also, at a later period, of *Graham's Magazine*, and subsequently, again, of *Peterson's National Magazine*. These announcements were announcements, and no more; the lady had nothing to do with the editorial control of any of the three last-named works.

The portrait of Mrs. Stephens, which appeared in *Graham's Magazine* for November, 1844, cannot fairly be considered a likeness at all. She is tall, and slightly inclined to *embonpoint*—an English figure. Her forehead is somewhat low, but broad; the features generally massive, but full of life and intellectuality. The eyes are blue and brilliant; the hair blonde and very luxuriant.

EVERT A. DUYCKINCK

Mr. Duyckinck is one of the most influential of the

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New York *Intérateurs*, and has done a great deal for the interest of American letters. Not the least important service rendered by him was the projection and editorship of Wiley & Putnam's "Library of Choice Reading," a series which brought to public notice many valuable foreign works which had been suffering under neglect in this country, and at the same time afforded unwonted encouragement to native authors by publishing their books, in good style and in good company, without trouble or risk to the authors themselves, and in the very teeth of the disadvantages arising from the want of an international copyright law. At one period it seemed that this happy scheme was to be overwhelmed by the competition of rival publishers,—taken, in fact, quite out of the hands of those who, by "right of discovery," were entitled at least to its first-fruits. A great variety of "Libraries," in imitation, were set on foot, but whatever may have been the temporary success of any of these latter, the original one had already too well established itself in the public favor to be overthrown, and thus has not been prevented from proving of great benefit to our literature at large.

Mr. Duyckinck has slyly acquired much fame and numerous admirers under the *nom de plume* of "Felix Merry." The various essays thus signed have attracted attention everywhere from the judicious. The style is remarkable for its very unusual blending of

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purity and ease with a seemingly inconsistent originality, force, and independence.

"Felix Merry," in connection with Mr. Cornelius Mathews, was one of the editors and originators of *Arcturus*, decidedly the very best magazine in many respects ever published in the United States. A large number of its most interesting papers were the work of Mr. D. The magazine was, upon the whole, a little too good to enjoy extensive popularity; although I am here using an equivocal phrase, for a better journal might have been far more acceptable to the public. I must be understood, then, as employing the epithet "good" in the sense of the literary quietists. The general taste of *Arcturus* was, I think, excessively tasteful; but this character applies rather more to its external or mechanical appearance than to its essential qualities. Unhappily, magazines and other similar publications are, in the beginning, judged chiefly by externals. People saw *Arcturus* looking very much like other works which had failed through notorious dulness, although admitted as *arbitri elegantiarum* in all points of what is termed taste or decorum; and they, the people, had no patience to examine any further. Caesar's wife was required not only to be virtuous but to seem so, and in letters it is demanded not only that we be not stupid, but that we do not array ourselves in the habiliments of stupidity.

It cannot be said of *Arcturus* exactly that it wanted

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force. It was deficient in power of impression, and this deficiency is to be attributed mainly to the exceeding brevity of its articles, a brevity that degenerated into mere paragraphism, precluding dissertation or argument, and thus all permanent effect. The magazine, in fact, had some of the worst or most inconvenient features without any of the compensating advantages of a weekly literary newspaper. The mannerism to which I refer seemed to have its source in undue admiration and consequent imitation of *The Spectator*.

In addition to his more obvious literary engagements, Mr. Duyckinck writes a great deal, editorially and otherwise, for *The Democratic Review*, *The Morning News*, and other periodicals.

In character he is remarkable, distinguished for the *bonhomie* of his manner, his simplicity and single-mindedness, his active beneficence, his hatred of wrong done even to any enemy, and especially for an almost Quixotic fidelity to his friends. He seems in perpetual good humor with all things, and I have no doubt that in his secret heart he is an optimist.

In person he is equally simple as in character; the one is a pendant of the other. He is about five feet eight inches high, somewhat slender. The forehead, phrenologically, is a good one; eyes and hair light; the whole expression of the face that of serenity and benevolence, contributing to give an idea of youthful-

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ness. He is probably thirty, but does not seem to be twenty-five. His dress, also, is in full keeping with his character, scrupulously neat, but plain, and conveying an instantaneous conviction of the gentleman. He is a descendant of one of the oldest and best Dutch families in the state. Married.

MARY GOVE

Mrs. Mary Gove, under the pseudonym of "Mary Orme," has written many excellent papers for the magazines. Her subjects are usually tinged with the mysticism of the transcendentalists, but are truly imaginative. Her style is quite remarkable for its luminousness and precision, two qualities very rare with her sex. An article entitled "The Gift of Prophecy," published originally in *The Broadway Journal*, is a fine specimen of her manner.

Mrs. Gove, however, has acquired less notoriety by her literary compositions than by her lectures on physiology to classes of females. These lectures are said to have been instructive and useful; they certainly elicited much attention. Mrs. G. has also given public discourses on mesmerism, I believe, and other similar themes—matters which put to the severest test the credulity, or, more properly, the faith of mankind. She is, I think, a mesmerist, a Swedenborgian, a phrenologist, a homœopathist, and a disciple of Priessnitz; what more I am not prepared to say.

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She is rather below the medium height, somewhat thin, with dark hair, and keen, intelligent black eyes. She converses well and with enthusiasm. In many respects a very interesting woman.

JAMES ALDRICH

Mr. Aldrich has written much for the magazines, etc., and at one time assisted Mr. Park Benjamin in the conduct of *The New World*. He also originated, I believe, and edited a not very long-lived or successful weekly paper, called *The Literary Gazette*, an imitation in its external appearance of the London journal of the same name. I am not aware that he has made any collection of his writings. His poems abound in the true poetic spirit, but they are frequently chargeable with plagiarism, or something much like it. True, I have seen but three of Mr. Aldrich's compositions in verse,—the three (or perhaps there are four of them) included by Dr. Griswold in his *Poets and Poetry of America*. Of these three (or four), however, there are two which I cannot help regarding as palpable plagiarisms. Of one of them, in especial, *A Death-Bed*, it is impossible to say a plausible word in defence. Both in matter and manner it is nearly identical with a little piece entitled *The Death-Bed*, by Thomas Hood.

The charge of plagiarism, nevertheless, is a purely

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literary one; and a plagiarism, even distinctly proved, by no means necessarily involves any moral delinquency. This proposition applies very especially to what appear to be poetical thefts. The poetic sentiment presupposes a keen appreciation of the beautiful with a longing for its assimilation into the poetic identity. What the poet intensely admires becomes thus, in very fact, although only partially, a portion of his own soul. Within this soul it has a secondary origination; and the poet, thus possessed by another's thought, cannot be said to take of it possession. But in either view he thoroughly feels it as his own; and the tendency to this feeling is counteracted only by the sensible presence of the true, palpable origin of the thought in the volume whence he has derived it, an origin which, in the long lapse of years, it is impossible not to forget, should the thought itself, as it often is, be forgotten. But the frailest association will regenerate it; it springs up with all the vigor of a new birth; its absolute originality is not with the poet a matter even of suspicion; and when he has written it and printed it, and on its account is charged with plagiarism, there will be no one more entirely astounded than himself. Now, from what I have said, it appears that the liability to accidents of this character is in the direct ratio of the poetic sentiment, of the susceptibility to the poetic impression; and, in fact, all literary history demonstrates that, for the

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most frequent and palpable plagiarisms we must search the works of the most eminent poets.

Since penning the above I have found five quatrains by Mr. Aldrich, with the heading *Molly Gray*. These verses are in the fullest exemplification of what I have just said of their author, evincing at once, in the most remarkable manner, both his merit as an imaginative poet and his unconquerable proneness to imitation. I quote the two concluding quatrains:

Pretty, fairy Molly Gray!
What may thy fit emblem be ?
Stream or star or bird or flower—
They are all too poor for thee.

No type to match thy beauty
My wandering fancy brings—
Not fairer than its chrysalis
Thy soul with its golden wings !

Here the " Pretty, fairy Molly Gray! " will put every reader in mind of Tennyson's " Airy, fairy Lillian! " by which Mr. Aldrich's whole poem has been clearly suggested; but the thought in the *finale* is, as far as I know anything about it, original, and is not more happy than happily expressed.

Mr. Aldrich is about thirty-six years of age. In regard to his person there is nothing to be especially noted.

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HENRY CARY

Dr. Griswold introduces Mr. Cary to the appendix of *The Poets and Poetry* as Mr. Henry Carey, and gives him credit for an anacreontic song of much merit entitled, or commencing, *Old Wine to Drink*. This was not written by Mr. Cary. He has composed little verse, if any, but, under the *nom de plume* of "John Waters," has acquired some note by a series of prose essays in the New York *American* and *The Knickerbocker*. These essays have merit, unquestionably, but some person, in an article furnished the *Broadway Journal*, before my assumption of its editorship, has gone to the extreme of toadyism in their praise. This critic (possibly Mr. Briggs) thinks that John Waters "is in some sort a Sam Rogers"; "resembles Lamb in fastidiousness of taste"; "has a finer artistic taste than the author of the *Sketch-Book*"; that his "sentences are the most perfect in the language—too perfect to be peculiar"; that "it would be a vain task to hunt through them all for a superfluous conjunction," and that "we need them [the works of John Waters] as models of style in these days of rhodomontades and Macaulayisms!"

The truth seems to be that Mr. Cary is a vivacious, fanciful, entertaining essayist, a fifth or sixth rate one, with a style that, as times go, in view of such stylists as Mr. Briggs, for example, may be termed

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respectable, and no more. What the critic of the *B. J.* wishes us to understand by a style that is "too perfect," "the most perfect," etc., it is scarcely worth while to inquire, since it is generally supposed that "perfect" admits of no degrees of comparison; but if Mr. Briggs (or whoever it is) finds it "a vain task to hunt" through all Mr. John Waters's works "for a superfluous conjunction," there are few schoolboys who would not prove more successful hunters than Mr. Briggs.

"It was well filled," says the essayist, on the very page containing these encomiums, "and yet the number of performers," etc. "We paid our visit to the incomparable ruins of the castle, and then proceeded to retrace our steps, and examine our wheels at every post-house reached," etc. "After consultation with a mechanic at Heidelberg, and finding that," etc. The last sentence should read, "Finding, after consultation," etc., the "and" would thus be avoided. Those in the two sentences first quoted are obviously pleonastic. Mr. Cary, in fact, abounds very especially in superfluities (as here, for example, "He seated himself at a piano that was near the front of the stage"), and, to speak the truth, is continually guilty of all kinds of grammatical improprieties. I repeat that in this respect he is decent, and no more.

Mr. Cary is what Dr. Griswold calls a "gentleman

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of elegant leisure." He is wealthy and much addicted to letters and *virtù*. For a long time he was President of the Phoenix Bank of New York, and the principal part of his life has been devoted to business. There is nothing remarkable about his personal appearance.

(Continued in Volume IX.)



